



***Sambucus*spp.**

Family: Caprifoliaceae

Elder

The genus *Sambucus* is composed of about 30 species, native to North America, Asia, Europe, northern Africa, the West Indies and the Andean region of South America. They are naturalized in areas. The word *sambucus* is the classical Latin name, believed to be from the Greek name of a stringed musical instrument made of the wood.

Sambucus callicarpa-California Tree Elder, Coast Red Elder, **Pacific Red Elder** Redberry Elder, Red Elderberry

Sambucus canadensis-**American Elder** Blackberry Elder, Common Elder, Common Elderberry

Sambucus canadensis var. *canadensis*-**American Elder (typical)**

Sambucus canadensis var. *laciniata*-**Florida Elder**, Florida Elderberry, Gulf Elder, Southern Elder

Sambucus cerulea-Blueberry Elder, **Blue Elder**, Blue Elderberry, New Mexico Elder

Sambucus mexicana-Arizona Elder, Desert Elderberry, **Mexican Elder**, Mountain Elder, New Mexico Elder, Sauco, Tapiro

Sambucus velutina-**Velvet Elder**, Velvetleaf Elder

Distribution

North America

The Tree

Elder trees are woody plants (trees to shrubs) with large, opposite leaves which may be evergreen or deciduous and are pinnately compound. They produce clusters of small white to pink flowers in flat topped clusters (like queen Anne's lace), which later develop into berry like fruits. Elders can attain a height of 50 feet, with diameters of 1 foot. The bark is thick, with irregular ridges or scales and is dark brown to reddish brown.

The following is for Blue Elder:

The Wood

General

The sapwood of Elder is white, while the heartwood is a yellowish brown. It has a low luster and no odor or taste. It is light weight, brittle and of medium texture.

Mechanical Properties (2-inch standard)

	Specific gravity	MOE x10 ⁶ lbf/in ²	MOR lbf/in ²	Compression		WML ^a in-lbf/in ³	Hardness lbf	Shear lbf/in ²
				Parallel lbf/in ²	Perpendicular lbf/in ²			
Green	0.46	0.90	6,600	3,040	520	8.8	720	1,090
Dry	0.52	1.03	9,200	5,090	760	9.9	840	-

^aWML = Work to maximum load.
Reference (59).

Drying and Shrinkage

Type of shrinkage	Percentage of shrinkage (green to final moisture content)		
	0% MC	6% MC	20% MC
Tangential	9.0	-	-
Radial	4.4	-	-
Volumetric	15.6	-	-

References: (59)

Kiln Drying Schedules: No information available at this time.

Working Properties: Elder is easy to work and finishes smoothly.

Durability: Elder is not durable.

Preservation: No information available at this time.

Uses: Twigs with pith removed were used for "spiles", the pipes used for getting maple sap to the bucket. Turnery.

Toxicity: The whole plant is poisonous (54)

Additional Reading and References Cited (in parentheses)

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