Madonna Elder

Sambucus nigra 'Madonna'

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Common Elder

Description:

An attractive garden shrub with golden-variegated foliage, showy clusters of small, creamy white flowers in spring followed by black berries and thick, pithy stems, quite coarse in winter; compact habit and very adaptable, survives with minimal care



Madonna Elder foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Madonna Elder features showy clusters of fragrant buttery yellow flowers held atop the branches in late spring. It has attractive yellow-variegated green foliage. The compound leaves are highly ornamental and turn yellow in fall. The black fruits are held in clusters in early fall.

Landscape Attributes

Madonna Elder is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a high maintenance shrub that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Madonna Elder is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Madonna Elder
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Madonna Elder will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.