



Elderberries of Atlantic Canada: 2SLGBTQ Seniors & Allies

Might you be an Elderberry?

Elderberries is a free organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited (2SLGBTQ) persons aged 50 plus, and our families, friends, and allies. If you are looking beyond the bar scene for a group whose members have life experience to mirror your own, Elderberries may be a good fit for you.

Not from Halifax? Join anyway! Many out-of-town members enjoy our newsletters and occasional Zoom gatherings, and we welcome visitors.

We now have more than three hundred and fifty members.

Origins

In 2010, Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project received from the provincial Department of Seniors Positive Aging Fund a grant for a project promoting increased social opportunities for LGBT elders. After community meetings, the seniors group began as an NSRAP project, but gradually became independent under the name *Elderberries*.

What do we do?

Programs and socials

Elderberries meet once or twice a month, usually on the second and/or fourth Sunday, in a wheelchair-accessible location. Meetings are alcohol-free, scent-free, and pet-free: assistance dogs are welcome.

Among our programs:

- cultural events: readings with local 2SLGBTQ authors, workshops on photography, musical performances
- talks on legal and medical topics: wills and inheritance, art therapy, the role of pharmacists in seniors' health care
- presentations by other organizations: Rainbow Refugees, Halifax Pride, Turret Arts Space
- picnics, potlucks, and a Pride Week Hangout

Speakers bureau

Upon request, Elderberries provides teams of speakers to schools and community groups. These elders can talk about growing up gay, lesbian, bi, or trans and coming out fifty years ago, or tackle issues facing 2SLGBTQ seniors today. There is no charge for this service, but donations to Elderberries are happily accepted.

More *What do we do?* →

History and archives

Elderberries works to present and preserve our community's stories:

- origins of the first Halifax Pride March
- memories of the Turret club
- Raymond Taavel Memorial Picnic
- advocating for trans rights

Research

Elderberries provides a contact point for researchers into 2SLGBTQ seniors' health, history, and culture. For example:

- Nova Scotia Department of Justice. Office of Equity and Anti-Racism. Survey and focus groups, June, 2024.
- ArQuives. Community Ties support session, March 2025.
- "From marginalized to visible: queer archives and public memory." Conference - 2026. Letter of support, April 2025.

Publications

Monthly e-mail newsletters keep members up-to-date on Elderberries Salons and other events.

Our popular 2011 cookbook, with recipes from Elderberry chefs, is still available upon request.

How can I join?

Membership is free To join, send an e-mail to:

AtlanticCanadaElderberries@gmail.com

You can also sign up at any Elderberries event. Our membership list is kept confidential.

What's in a name? Or, What is an Elderberry anyway?

Elderberry is a tall and widely spreading shrub. Different varieties produce berries of blue, purple, red, black, or other colours. Parts of the plant have been used to produce natural dyes.

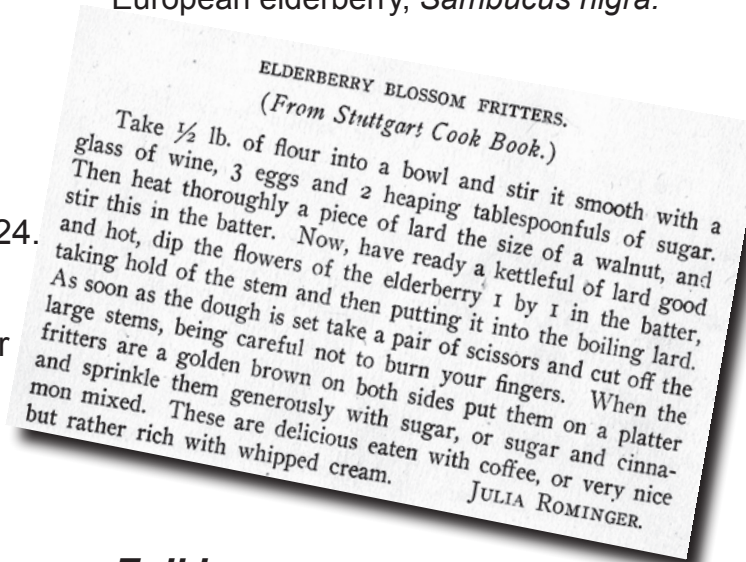
Medical uses: Canadian elderberry, or *Sambucus canadensis* grows in Nova Scotia.

Research on medical uses of elderberry has largely concentrated on the closely related European elderberry, *Sambucus nigra*.

The leaves, bark and uncooked berries of elderberry are toxic. The cooked berries of several varieties are used in food, liqueurs, and folk remedies.

Elderberry flowers are used externally in creams, washes, and poultices to treat skin conditions. The study of the plant's medicinal properties is ongoing.

Credits: Information on the elderberry was gathered from: drugs.com • en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambucus_canadensis • herbalreality.com • herbalwisdom.com • treesforlife.org.uk



Folklore

- elderberry was once planted by the back door to keep out evil spirits
- whoever slept under an elderberry bush on Midsummer Eve could see the faery king and queen pass by in the night
- a spirit called the Elder Mother lived in the elderberry tree, and would take her revenge if it were harmed.



The cover image is *The Elderberry Fairy* by Cicely Mary Barker, 1926, elderd and fairyed by Anita Martinez in 2012.

This is the 2025-06 edition of this brochure.