

California Phenology Project:
species profile for
Red Elderberry
(*Sambucus racemosa*)



CPP site(s) where this species is monitored: Redwood National Park



Photo credit: David Hoffmann (Flickr)

What does this species look like?

This species is a deciduous perennial shrub or small tree which can reach a height of 3-7 meters. Its green leaves have serrated edges and a strong, distinctive odor. The bark is dark reddish-brown with raised pores. The fragrant creamy-white flowers are arranged into dome-shaped clusters. The fruits are arranged in clusters of small, bright red, fleshy berries.

When monitoring this species, use the **USA-NPN deciduous trees and shrubs datasheet**.

Species facts!

- The CPP four letter code for this species is **SARA**.
- Native Americans used the fruits and bark medicinally.
- The fruits were used for seasoning in food, soups, and other dishes. They were eaten fresh as well as cooked to make jellies and jams; fruits were also used to make wine.
- Flowers can be either wind- or insect-pollinated.
- Seeds require fire, passage through animal guts, or stratification (alternating periods of cold and warmth) to break dormancy.



Photo credit: James Gaither (Flickr)



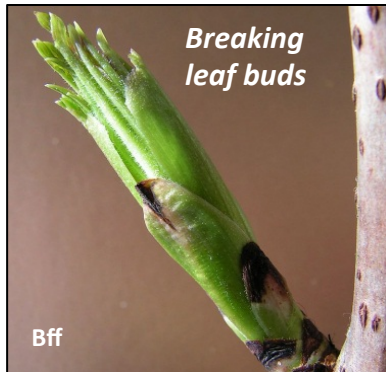
Photo credit: Walter Siegmund

Where is this species found?

- Occurs in riparian areas; found along streambanks, ravines, swamps, savannahs, wet meadows, and woodlands.
- Found in moist conifer forests; frequently associated with red alder.
- Grows best in deep loamy soil with good drainage.

For more information about phenology and the California Phenology Project (CPP), please visit the CPP website (www.usanpn.org/cpp) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org)

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Flowers or flower buds
When monitoring **flower or flower bud abundance** for this species, count each inflorescence as a single flowering structure! For example, if there are two inflorescences with many flowers or buds each, then abundance should be recorded as <3.



Open flowers
Can you see the stigma and anthers within the flowers? **Proportion of open flowers** should be recorded at the scale of individual flowers, not inflorescences (i.e. count individual flowers)!
Note: flower phenophases are nested; if you record **Y** for "open flowers" you should also record **Y** for "flowers or flower buds"



Fruits
The fruit is berry-like and usually changes from green to red or, rarely, to yellow or white, or red to purple-black; it falls from the plant when ripe.



Ripe fruits
Generally, the fruit is ripe when it is red or, rarely, depending on the variety, yellow white or purple-black. **Note:** fruit phenophases are nested; if you record **Y** for "ripe fruits" you should also record **Y** to "fruits"

Phenophases not pictured: **Colored leaves, Falling leaves and Recent fruit or seed drop**