

United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Ecological Sciences and Technology Division
Washington, D. C.

and

Soil Conservation Service
Columbia, Missouri

Notice of Release of 'Elsberry' Autumn Olive

The Ecological Sciences and Technology Division of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the Elsberry, Missouri, Plant Materials Center (SCS) announce the release of 'Elsberry' autumn olive, Elaeagnus umbellata Thumb.

This species was introduced into the United States from Southeast Asia in 1830. The Elsberry Plant Materials Center has evaluated accession MI-6369, 'Elsberry' autumn olive since 1962, receiving the original seedlings from the Forrest Keeling Nursery at Elsberry, Missouri.

At the Elsberry Plant Materials Center it grows into an open growing shrub reaching a height of 5.8 meters in 12 years. It begins to leaf out in mid-March and is fully leaved by March 30th. The leaves are silvery green. The main trunk and large branches are dark brown. The smaller branches and twigs are yellowish brown and rather spiny.

'Elsberry' autumn olive produces yellow sweet-scented flowers appearing about mid-April. The fruit is red in color and varies in size from .95 cm to 1.27 cm in diameter compared to .64 cm to .95 cm in diameter of the 'Cardinal' autumn olive. The fruits usually ripen in September. Retention of the fruits is usually until late winter which makes it a valuable wildlife shrub. It is also used in farmstead windbreaks, shelterbelts, screens or border plantings and landscape and beautification.

'Elsberry' autumn olive prefers a well-drained, fertile soil but it has done well on acid mine spoils with a PH of 4.0 and above. It also has the ability to fix nitrogen in the soil.

Plantings of 'Elsberry' have performed very well in plant hardiness zones 5, 6, and 7. This represents Illinois, southern Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, central and southeast Nebraska.

'Elsberry' requires planting on the leeward side of a windbreak in plant hardiness zone 4 to prevent freeze-back damage.

'Elsberry' is a prolific seed producer. It is released as an open-pollinated seed propagated cultivar. Propagation by commercial nurseries will be from open-pollinated seed. Breeder seed is maintained by the Plant Materials Center, Elsberry, Missouri. Seed to establish seed orchards of 'Elsberry' autumn olive is available from the Elsberry, Missouri, Plant Materials Center during the spring 1979; plants will be available the spring of 1980.

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