

# Pathways into elderberry production

**Andria Caruthers, PhD candidate (Natural Resources)**  
**Advisors: Robin Rotman, J.D., Dr. Michael Gold,**  
**Dr. Corinne Valdivia, Dr. Ben Knapp**

University of Missouri School of Natural Resources  
Center for Agroforestry  
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# Objectives

## Research objectives

- Describe pathways growers use to enter elderberry production
  - Pathways defined by...
    - Values and lifestyle goals
    - Growers' access to and mobilization of resources to seize emerging opportunities
      - Agricultural and non-agricultural activities/enterprises
- Develop typology of farms that have elderberry enterprises based on enterprise, farm and household characteristics
- Nuanced understanding of constraints and opportunities to address challenges/barriers to elderberry production
- Interviews and survey

# Background

## Preliminary data collection

- Collected data from River Hills Harvest Elderberry Conference & Workshop 2022
- Short surveys for elderberry growers to identify important resources growers use in the elderberry field

## General takeaways:

- Production is expanding
- Pre-commercial and commercial growers are diverse in motivations, goals, ag experience levels, and resource capacities
- Role of elderberry production in portfolio of on-farm activities varies

**What kind of systems are elderberry growers creating and engaging with to support the adoption and maintenance of elderberry production?**

# Methods: Interview elderberry growers

**Purpose:** Identify pathways and resources growers use to adopt and manage elderberry enterprises

**Methods:** Semi-structured interviews with elderberry growers in Missouri

*Sampling:* Missouri Department of Ag's Missouri Grown database, previous contacts, referrals

## *Interview protocol*

- Motivations to grow elderberries
- Values, attitudes, management behaviors
- Social relations/networks
- Resources
- Challenges/barriers to enterprise development

# Methods: Survey elderberry growers

**Purpose:** Describe influence of farm characteristics, household characteristics and resource capacities on the development and management of elderberry enterprises

**Methods:** Quantitative survey of US elderberry growers

## *Data collection and variable selection*

- Farmer characteristics
- Farm and household characteristics
  - Diversification and multifunctionality of land use/farm enterprises
- Livelihood capitals (physical, natural, human, social, financial)
- Elderberry enterprise characteristics and production methods
- Challenges as a sustainable livelihood strategy

# Grad student SARE Grant funding (2022-2024)

## Funding for projects

## Collaboration with Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture

- Elderberry and native medicinal species demo plantings
- Opportunity Gardens mentor program
- Educational materials
- Processing demonstrations
- Event outreach with elderberry and other niche crops



**Andria Caruthers**

**caruthersad@missouri.edu**



United States Department of Agriculture  
**National Institute of Food and Agriculture**



The Center for Agroforestry  
University of Missouri