Growing and Marketing Elderberry and Aronia

John Hayden, The Farm Between, Jeffersonville
THE FARM BETWEEN
Organic Fruit & Fine Fruit Products
Jeffersonville • Vermont
OUR EVOLUTION over 22 years
From livestock and veggies
To a higher calling - Fruit

VERMONT ORGANIC
CERTIFIED ORGANIC
VERMONT ORGANIC FARMERS
Markets: Direct Retail, Wholesale (Intervale Food Hub and Local Stores)
And a Fruit Nursery!
Providing habitat and floral resources for beneficials

Bombus ternarius on Phacelia from our NESARE Cover Crop Research
What these perennial fruit crops have in common

- Not well known by the general public
- Limited direct retail for fresh fruit
- In demand by Specialty Beverage Industry and other food entrepreneurs
- ‘Superberries’ with nutraceutical properties
- Cold hardy, easy to grow, can thrive in marginal sites
- Few serious pests, excellent pollinator plants
Black currants fit between Elderberries and Wild Blueberries
Currently in demand for specialty products
Elderberries

• Cultivated varieties of *Sambucus canadensis* are ‘Nova’, ‘York’, ‘Adams’, ‘Johns’
• We are trialing European *Sambucus nigra* ‘Samyl’ and ‘Samdal’
• Can yield 10 lbs/plant and fast to pick
• Need to be de-stemmed
Aronia
(Black Chokeberry)

• Aronia is cold hardy (to about –40°F) and the late blooming period avoids damage by spring frosts.
• Plants can tolerate wet soil and temporary flooding, but not drought.
• Plants are vigorous, growing to 8' tall, and mature plants may have up to 40 canes/bush.
• Pruning - Thinning of the older canes is recommended every few years.
• Yields of **22 lbs (10 kg) per bush average** from mature plantings are reported in Eastern Europe.
• Cultivated varieties ‘Nero’ and ‘Viking’

Source: Washington State University Extension
3 year old elderberry bush
Flowers are marketable too
Traditional Establishment Method
Till a strip into a cover crop
No-till with woven landscape fabric for weed control

And moisture retention
Bird Protection
Fruit Syrups as Value-added Product

Frozen fruit helps cash flow in winter

$12/12oz, with 5# fruit making about 100 oz
Syrup Production with Mehu Liisa Steam Juicer
Snow Cones and Sodas add value to Syrups

1.5 oz/serving