

Elderberry Planning Budget

Using this budget, farmers can estimate the costs and returns for growing elderberry. Table 1 presents estimates for Missouri based on assumptions and prices in October 2024. Production area is assumed to have 908 elderberry plants (4-foot-by-12-foot row spacing) growing in an open field on 1 acre with irrigation. Detailed assumptions and capital investments are summarized in Tables 2, 3 and 4. Assumptions in this budget can be modified for your situation. Use the “Your estimate” column to plan your elderberry operation’s costs and returns.

Table 1. Missouri elderberry budget.

	Year 1 Establishment	Year 2 Production	Year 3 Production	Year 4 Production	Year 5 Production	Your estimate
Elderberry production (pounds per acre):	0	1,000	1,800	4,500	6,000	
	Dollars per acre ¹					
Income						
Elderberry (<i>destemmed</i>)	0.00	3,000.00	5,400.00	13,500.00	18,000.00	
Elderflower	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Cuttings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total income	0.00	3,000.00	5,400.00	13,500.00	18,000.00	
Operating costs						
Establishment ²	4,154.50					
Fertilizer	65.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	
Weed and pest control	130.00	130.00	130.00	130.00	130.00	
Labor	592.00	777.00	1,554.00	3,330.00	3,330.00	
Machinery (<i>utility task vehicle</i>)	0.00	34.72	69.44	104.16	138.88	
Buckets and delivery	0.00	430.00	774.00	1,935.00	2,580.00	
Repairs and maintenance	64.50	174.50	174.50	324.50	324.50	
Utilities	0.00	100.00	180.00	450.00	600.00	
Farm supplies	0.00	20.00	36.00	90.00	120.00	
Operating interest	193.98	68.60	117.10	250.62	283.94	
Total operating costs	5,199.98	1,838.82	3,139.04	6,718.28	7,611.32	
Ownership costs						
Depreciation on capital investments	369.05	1,407.14	1,407.14	2,407.14	2,407.14	
Interest on capital investments	398.75	632.56	632.56	1,176.31	1,176.31	
Real estate charge	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	
Overhead, taxes and insurance	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	
Total ownership costs	872.80	2,144.71	2,144.71	3,688.46	3,688.46	
Total costs	6,072.78	3,983.52	5,283.75	10,406.74	11,299.77	
Income over operating costs	-5,199.98	1,161.18	2,260.96	6,781.72	10,388.68	
Income over total costs	-6,072.78	-983.52	116.25	3,093.26	6,700.23	

1. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Establishment costs includes soil test, field preparation (custom hire), ag lime, woven weed barrier, elderberry cuttings, and weed barrier installation (custom hire).

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Table 2 provides establishment assumptions for the elderberry budget. Note that planting labor and fertilizer expenses are shown separately (Table 3) in the elderberry budget but are conducted during the Year 1 establishment activities. Custom hire is assumed for field preparation (tilling rows) and installing woven weed barrier.

Destemmed, clean and sanitized elderberries are assumed to be marketed at \$3 per pound to a regional processor or market outlet. Table 3 provides selected inputs (fertilizer, weed control, labor and storage buckets) for this budget by year. Real estate charge is an estimated rental rate for mixed hay cropland.

Table 4 provides investments needed by year. An existing groundwater well is assumed as the water supply for the irrigation system with an investment needed only for supply connection. Irrigation investment includes dripline equipment, supplies, fertigation system and installation expense. Annual interest rate assumed on capital investments is 7.25%.

Farmers can customize this budget using the Missouri Elderberry Budget spreadsheet, which can be downloaded from the specialty crops section of the [Missouri Crop and Livestock Enterprise Budgets webpage](https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/agricultural-business-and-policy-extension/missouri-crop-and-livestock-enterprise-budgets) (extension.missouri.edu/programs/agricultural-business-and-policy-extension/missouri-crop-and-livestock-enterprise-budgets).

Table 2. Establishment assumptions used in elderberry planning budget.

Selected inputs	Unit	Dollars per unit	Quantity of units	Total (dollars)
Soil test	each	25.00	1	25.00
Field preparation (custom hire)	hour	32.00	8	256.00
Lime	ton	30.00	0.5	15.00
Woven weed barrier (6-foot wide)	foot	0.33	3,650	1,204.50
Elderberry cuttings	each	2.50	908	2,270.00
Woven weed barrier installation (custom hire)	hour	32.00	12	384.00

Table 3. Input assumptions used in elderberry planning budget.

Selected inputs	Unit	Dollars per unit	Year 1 units	Year 2 units	Year 3 units	Year 4 units	Year 5 units
Nitrogen fertilizer	pound	1.30	50	80	80	80	80
Mowings	mowing	20.00	6	6	6	6	6
Labor – Planting	hour	18.50	32	0	0	0	0
Labor – Crop maintenance	hour	18.50	0	30	30	30	30
Labor – Harvest	hour	18.50	0	8	36	100	100
Labor – Destemming and sanitation	hour	18.50	0	4	18	50	50
Food grade buckets	each	7.00	0	40	72	180	240

Table 4. Equipment and infrastructure assumptions used in elderberry planning budget.

Investments	Year installed	Total (dollars)	Lifespan (years)	Depreciation (dollars)	Interest (dollars)
Irrigation system and installation	1	3,200.00	15	213.33	116.00
Water supply connection	1	1,000.00	25	40.00	36.25
Fencing and wildlife control	1	2,000.00	25	80.00	72.50
Miscellaneous equipment	1	250.00	7	35.71	9.06
Destemming and cleaning equipment	2	8,000.00	10	800.00	290.00
Freezer (used)	2	2,500.00	15	166.67	90.63
Miscellaneous equipment	2	500.00	7	71.43	18.13
Walk-in freezer (used)	4	15,000.00	15	1,000.00	543.75
Total				2,407.14	1,176.31