



# L I O N B E R R Y

## Q&A

### Transcripts, Summaries, and Explanations

This document presents a collection of Q&A sessions about Lionberry products, American elderberry, and Lion's Mane mushroom.

### **The Power of American Elderberry: Local Roots, Global Impact**

#### **Does elderberry grow locally in Kansas and Missouri?**

Elderberry is native to the Midwest and is definitely a native plant in Kansas and Missouri. The cultivars we use here include Pocahontas, Cherokee, Bob Gordon, Adams, Ranch, and Marge. (Marge is not technically American elderberry, but the others are.)

The American elderberry is especially important. We all remember COVID and the supply chain disruptions, when we wanted products we couldn't get. Looking forward, global politics and economics are uncertain, so it's critical to build a strong local supply chain. To replace European elderberry—currently dehydrated into powders and shipped overseas to fill American drugstores—we need about 22,000 acres of American elderberry.

One of our projects with KEIB, the Kansas Eastern Elderberry Branch, is to help farmers learn about American elderberry so they can plant it in acre form or as hedgerows along their fields. It's one of the easiest first steps toward regenerative farming and soil health. Elderberry roots reduce erosion, bring in pollinators, and create an ecosystem balance—enough good bugs like ladybugs can reduce the need for spraying. The plants sequester carbon, compost back into the soil each year, add nitrogen, and act as a cover crop. They also provide an additional revenue stream for farmers.

For large-scale industrial farmers, it can be hard to shift practices, but elderberry offers a practical "first step." With only 50 years of good soil left, we need low-till, erosion-

conscious, diverse planting practices. Elderberry can serve as both a starting point and a unifying symbol—an “olive branch” or, more fittingly, an elderberry branch.

## **Food as Medicine: Elderberry, Lion’s Mane, and Soil Health**

Food is literally medicine. It helps with the immune system, inflammation, and the gut biome—there’s plenty of research supporting all of that. Lion’s mane is also valuable for regenerative nerve health. And elderberry is very good for both human health and for regenerative agriculture. I’d say the two main points about elderberry are that it’s good for the soil and healthy for us to consume.

## **Lion’s Mane Extract: Brain Health and Nerve Regeneration**

### **What’s in that dropper? It looks really interesting.**

This is Lion’s Mane. It’s a double extract—both alcohol and water—produced in a reactor at Meyers Mushrooms. Meyers is considered an expert in the Midwest on Lion’s Mane and tinctures, and this extraction is very powerful.

It contains both the fruiting body and some mycelium, which provide the beneficial plant compounds we need—the precursors and stimulants for nerve growth factor (NGF) and brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). These are essentially “miracle grow” for nerve dendrites or branches.

When life events occur—such as depression, stroke, mental illness, or simply aging—our nerve branches and dendrites shrink. In youth, we naturally have more NGF and BDNF, but over time they decline. Research on Lion’s Mane has shown that compounds called hericenones and erinacines stimulate NGF and BDNF, promoting nerve regrowth.

People usually take about half a dropper mixed into coffee, tea, or a smoothie. On its own, the flavor is very strong—like mushroom extract or “mushroom vodka.” But once blended into a drink, the taste disappears.

### **Is that the same kind of Lion’s Mane found at the farmer’s market?**

Yes. Fresh Lion’s Mane is delicious, often compared to seafood, and can be cooked. However, to reach the same phytonutrient levels as the extract, you’d need to eat huge amounts. Extracts provide concentrated benefits for nerve regeneration.

That’s why we include Lion’s Mane in Lionberry—combining it with elderberry for both health and flavor.

## Getting Started with Elderberry: Drinks or Concentrates

### **If I am new to elderberry, where would you suggest I start with your products?**

It depends on your personality. If you like to do things yourself, you might take a teaspoon each day of the more concentrated form. Or, if you'd rather try something ready-made, you can start with a four-pack of the elderberry drink and see how you like it.

Both options taste great—even the concentrated forms. They have a flavor similar to grape and tart cherry, so they're very pleasant. Either way works.

I often say that food is literally medicine. That's been highlighted in recent documentaries like *Common Ground*, and I truly believe it. Food has always been medicine. It's not some new trend—it's part of our history. We've always eaten with health in mind, and from an evolutionary standpoint, that hasn't changed.

So, eating what's healthy for us is the first step—not only toward personal wellness but also toward regenerative agriculture.

## Why Take Elderberry? Antioxidants and Inflammation Support

### **I hear a lot about elderberry. It sounds like it's really popular right now, but why should I be taking it?**

Elderberry is simply a very good food. On antioxidant scales, depending on which one you look at, elderberry often ranks five to ten times higher than fruits like raspberries or blueberries.

The primary type of antioxidant in elderberry is called an anthocyanin, which is common in purple fruits. Among fruits, elderberry ranks near the very top for anthocyanin content—second only to chokeberry.

These antioxidants are especially beneficial for reducing inflammation in the body. As they break down, they form helpful metabolites, including protocatechuic acid, which also supports health.

## When Will I Notice Results from Lion's Mane?

### **Will I notice results from Lion's Mane right away?**

I don't give medical advice—these are foods. But I've read a lot of research, and of course I take it myself. Research suggests that men may notice results a little faster than women. Generally, people see benefits somewhere between one and three weeks if they use Lion's

Mane as part of a daily ritual. Even just two milliliters a day can be effective, though you can certainly take more.

I hear from everyone—seniors facing cognitive decline to members of Gen Z dealing with ADHD. Interest in Lion’s Mane is growing rapidly. I believe that within the next four or five years, it will become a common staple in our kitchen cabinets. Just as calcium and vitamin D are added to orange juice and milk, or iodine fortifies salt, Lion’s Mane will be used to fortify drinks—such as Lionberry.

## Will Picky Kids Like the Taste of Elderberry?

### Is this something my picky kids will like?

Yes—it was made with picky kids in mind (and picky big kids, too). The Concord grape and tart cherry make the elderberry sips taste phenomenal. They’re not bitter or clove-like—although I enjoy those flavors, they’re not always popular with picky eaters.

Instead, the drink tastes like a really natural Pedialyte or Gatorade, with a nice honey, tart cherry, and lemon flavor. It’s very good. You’ll notice undertones of elderflower tea and elderberry, but the majority of the base is elderflower tea.

## Lion’s Mane Extract and Nerve Growth Support

### What’s in that dropper? It looks really interesting.

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When life events occur—such as depression, stroke, mental illness, or aging—our nerve branches shrink. When we were younger, we had more NGF and BDNF in our systems. Lion’s Mane has been studied extensively, and robust research shows that it provides compounds that help restore nerve growth.

## Building a Local Value Chain: Kansas State Fair

I’m super excited this year to be at the Kansas State Fair. I’ll have my products there as part of what I call my 24-farm value chain. This connects me with Meyers Mushrooms, Shoney

Honey, Elder Farms, and Bueller Organics, who help juice the elderberries. I also work with partners who help with elderberry extracts.

Together, this creates a value chain that recirculates the local dollar. When you spend money with me, I turn around and purchase from local farmers, keeping that multiplier effect going right back into the community. That makes me very excited to be at the Kansas State Fair.

I'll also be inviting my friends and collaborators from the value chain to be guest speakers at my booth, because everyone involved in helping me make these products deserves to connect with the community too.

## Elderberry Products and Low-Sugar Options

I often get asked if these products are good for people on keto, or for those who are working out, weightlifting, or otherwise avoiding sugar.

All of my products—except for the Lion's Mane tincture, which is simply Lion's Mane and alcohol—contain honey. We use local raw Shoney honey. So, they're not calorie-free and they do contain some natural carbohydrates, but there is no added sugar and certainly nothing artificial or processed like cane sugar.

I also offer a product, sourced from a friend, called elderberry extract. It contains no added sugar at all, making it a great option for people who want to use elderberry without the sweetness.

## Find Us at Festivals and the Kansas State Fair

I wish this one was ice cold!

We have refreshers available at Lenexa, Gardner, and starting tomorrow at the Farm Coalition. Every weekend we're at a big event—like a festival—and we'll also be at the Kansas State Fair.

Come find us, or check out the [lionberry.us](http://lionberry.us) website to see where we'll be. Stop by, try a recovery drink, and cool off. It's really hot out there, and this—along with some water—will help you stay refreshed.

## How Much Lionberry Should I Drink?

**If I get Lionberry, should I drink the whole bottle or just half?**

That's a fun question—it's like asking me how much of a sandwich you should eat. You can drink the whole bottle if you're thirsty and want to enjoy it.

Personally, I sometimes split the bottle, just to be a little more mindful of calories since it does contain honey. But it's still a food, so it's really about what works for you.

My husband is a welder, and he chugs these bottles. I also work with a couple of athletes who do the same. There's absolutely nothing wrong with drinking a whole bottle.