



# THE ELDERBERRY CO.

## Remedy for Owner, Families Across U.S.

By Rebecca Patrick

Call Jenny Watson the accidental entrepreneur.

When the New Albany resident started making elderberry syrup, her motivation was a very personal one: to keep her and her family – especially her young son – healthy and out of the doctor’s office.

Now 10, her oldest child spent his first year “riddled with sniffles” and repeatedly diagnosed with ear infections and prescribed antibiotics.

“As a mom, I really felt powerless to be able to help my child feel better. I was a new mom and didn’t quite know what to do, but I had remembered a lot of moms telling me during my pregnancy that a great way to fight a cold naturally was elderberry syrup,” shares Watson.

“So, when my son was a little over a year old, I finally tried giving him (homemade) elderberry syrup – and he never got another ear infection after that.”

Elderberries contain natural antioxidants and are an anti-inflammatory.

“Studies out there show that it does support your immune system, boost it and cut the durations of colds, flu and allergies,” Watson relays.

### Taking flight

Not wanting to sit on her revelation, Watson felt compelled to share it with family and friends. In November 2017, she posted about it on Facebook, offering them a sample of the syrup she had made herself. After Watson handed out her “little jars,” one friend planted a

seed with the then stay-at-home mom.

“(She said) if you ever wanted to sell this, I would have 100 people that would want to buy it,” Watson recalls. Well, it wasn’t quite 100 right away, but enough to spur her on.

What followed was a Facebook group, an informational website and Watson selling off her front porch to friends and family in her community. From there, she joined the local farmer’s market, which finally got her product out to complete strangers.

Since Watson was making the syrup in her own kitchen, she couldn’t sell it online (due to Indiana’s Cottage Food Law). She felt she needed to take the next step or pack it in.

Watson went for it. In October 2018, about a year after that first Facebook post, she found a commercial kitchen to rent, and soon The Elderberry Co. was online and shipping its product nationwide. The company quickly outgrew its space and in the spring of 2019 moved to its current storefront in downtown New Albany.

“I grew four times my size in just one month,” Watson marvels. “I was doing just a few thousand dollars in revenue a month before. (After going online), I think my first month was about \$25,000. I was like, ‘Oh, this is fun. I’m enjoying it!’”

But that was just a small taste of things to come.

The Elderberry Co. was processing 4,000 orders a month prior to January 2020. Two months later after COVID hit, the March orders totaled 14,000. Sales jumped from \$500,000 in 2019 to \$3.2 million in 2020.

While some new customers stayed on, the demand, as expected,

dropped post pandemic. But Watson reports activity has slowly built back up through expanded offerings, and revenue is at an all-time high: \$3.3 million for 2024.

In comparison to the booming online transactions, the storefront accounts for only about 10% of the overall sales. But it represents something much greater.

“I believe it’s really important to contribute to your community and other small business owners that are down the street and are so reliant on that foot traffic. I’m so happy to be a staple in this community,” Watson remarks.

## A look inside

Watson, who holds a psychology degree, has no formal training for her entrepreneurial endeavor. But she has immense passion and created a method that works for her.

“I’m teaching myself everything, but I am putting people around me that know what they’re doing and are helpful to me and can help me navigate some of these moments (that any business faces).”

The Elderberry Co. today employs roughly 15 – four to five are full time. A significant portion of the workday is spent on customer service and answering the many questions people have.

In 2022, Watson hired and trained someone to be the brewmaster, so to speak, and take over making the elderberry syrup.

“That was hard for me to let go of. But I couldn’t grow my business if I was making the syrup,” she acknowledges. “It’s my origin story. I was that mom who needed to feel empowered” – making her the best face and voice to elevate the business.

A big believer in work-life balance, Watson views her small team “as a ministry for me in helping them redefine what work looks like and the work culture that they can be a part of and how life-giving work can and should be. You should work hard, but you also should be passionate about what you’re doing and have it contribute to your own life story.

“I’m thankful to give people the opportunity to really thrive in their work and enjoy it – and not go to a job just to pay the bills.”

## The celebrated syrup

What energizes everyone is the elderberry syrup and what it can do. The mixture is a blend of berries, spices and honey. The company uses beer brewing equipment and Watson likens the effort to a “giant tea-steeping process.”

She says adults can take a tablespoon a day and children receive a teaspoon.

“If you’re fighting something or if you’ve been exposed to an illness, you can take that up to three times a day just in a little medicine cup or shot glass – or sip it right out of the jar.”



Pictured with her inspiration, her own family, Watson says, “We’ve expanded our umbrella of products to be more of the mentality of healthy families, happy families. We want to help families stay healthy and active so they don’t have to miss a beat.”

The fact that the syrup isn’t shelf stable is the primary reason for it not being available outside the U.S. or found in large retail stores.

Watson explains, “The problem with shelf stable is that it requires us to heat the honey to cook it, and the honey being raw is such a wonderful benefit.”

Her elderberry syrup lasts two months in the refrigerator. What can be purchased in big stores, which contains preservatives and sugar, is likely to last several years.

## Growing product line

As of 2025, The Elderberry Co. has an impressive 40 products – health items, skincare, candles, honey, tea, beard care and more.

Though the elderberry syrup remains the top seller and accounts for approximately half of all sales, several other products are gaining in popularity.

The elderberry gummies – essentially the syrup in gummy form – is the next best-seller. An outside manufacturer takes the syrup and makes the gummies, which are shelf stable.

“You can take two to three gummies and get the same amount of antioxidants and elderberry strength that’s in the syrup,” Watson notes.

A relative newcomer, the magnesium balm, is the third most purchased item. Watson touts it’s good for muscle aches and pains, as well as for mood and sleep.

“I’m getting the best sleep of my life by putting that on my feet at night. It’s just helping me stay rested, stay asleep at night,” she emphasizes. (It’s worth noting Watson says this despite the fact she was eight months pregnant when the interview took place.)

Collagen and biotin gummies for hair, skin and nail growth also are highly sought after.

## Looking ahead and blessings

For this year and beyond, Watson has expansion on her mind.

“The next step is getting product into big stores,” she declares. That will mean taking the leap to having a shelf stable syrup.

“It wouldn’t replace what we’re doing, but the shelf stable syrup would serve our community so much better because it could get into those bigger stores where people are going and looking for remedies, and we could reach a lot more customers in that way.”

She continues, “There’s not a way that it could have the raw honey in it, but it will still have the benefit of our syrup in the form of the berries and the spices. And it’s not going to have crappy sugars in it.”

Watson is thrilled at the pace with which her business has grown and the way things unfolded.

That includes not getting to the final round of TV’s *Shark Tank* to make a pitch before the investors.

Looking back, she realizes she wasn't ready. "It would have been too big for my britches. I probably would've sold half my company," she reasons. "Now, I've gotten to where I've gotten and I'm still the owner and a woman-owned, certified small business. It's working for what my family and I need, and it's just blessed us a lot."

Watson also readily admits the level of her business' success is not something she ever envisioned.

"I had no idea I had this gift in me. But I've been really, really successful at it," she enthuses.

"My husband ended up leaving his job in ministry (as a youth pastor) just to help at home more because the business required so much more of my time and energy that we needed him at home to help with the kiddos.

"That's been hard, but (it's also) amazing to be able to have started this hobby and then it's our source of income now. Hopefully, it'll continue to be a legacy for my family – and all from a Facebook post!"



Watson is thankful for the blossoming success of her hobby turned multimillion-dollar enterprise. She's also enjoying the ride and "that entrepreneur feeling of leadership and empowerment."

**RESOURCE:** Jenny Watson, The Elderberry Co., at [www.theelderberryco.com](http://www.theelderberryco.com)



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