

Elderflower Recipes

Contributed by Cab with help from other downsizers

There are few trees that embody early Summer in the way that the elder does. Its gnarled, ugly wood and nasty smelling leaves belie the fact that soon enough the tree will come to life with frothy, creamy white umbels of flowers. And for those of us who eagerly await the arrival of the elderflower each year, this is a bounty not to be missed.

Elderflower Milkshake

6 heads elderflowers

300ml whole milk

1 egg

1 tablespoon of honey

Heat the milk till scalding (hot, just off the boil) and add the elder flower heads. Steep them in the milk for 5 minutes or so. While steeping, blend the egg yolk with honey, and when the milk has cooled little remove the heads, and carefully combine it with the yolk and honey. Put this somewhere to cool; when it is cool, beat the egg white till stiff, fold it in with the milk mixture, and get the whole thing nice and chilled.

Elderflower Jam

Elderflowers combine superbly well with various summer fruits in jam. Of particular note are apricot, strawberry, gooseberry (the most traditional) and rhubarb; use any reliable recipe for these jams that you know. You can do this by boiling the flowers, rubbed from the stalks, in a jelly bag in the jam, but I like the appearance of the flowers in the jam, so I throw in a handful of elderflowers shortly before the jam is cooked, and bottle as normal. Elderflower Fritters

Take your elderflower heads and give them a good shake to remove bugs. Make up a batter with egg yolks, flour and milk, with just a tiny pinch of salt, and beat the egg whites. Mix the whites into the batter, and thin the batter till it's thin-ish. Dip the flower heads in and fry till golden. Serve hot, with honey.

Elderflower Wine

1 1/2 pints of elderflowers, rubbed from the stalks and pressed down lightly

1 gallon water

Juice of 1 lemon

2 1/2 lb of sugar

1 pound of raisins

1 cup of strong black tea

All purpose wine yeast

There are hundreds of recipes for this; I've made it a number of different ways, all of which turn out slightly different. This is one I've found to be reliable.

Put the elderflowers and raisins into the bag, and make as per normal instructions (see:

http://www.downsizer.net/Projects/Home_Brewing/Herb_and_Flower_Wines/

Elderflower 'Champagne' (submitted by Goxhill, adapted from 'The Shirley Goode Kitchen' [BBC Publications 1986])

4 large heads of elderflowers, picked on a dry sunny day

Juice & thinly pared rind of 1 lemon

2 tablespoons white vinegar

1 1/2 lb [700g] granulated sugar

Place all the ingredients in large container with 8 pints [4.5 litres] water. Stir to dissolve the sugar, cover with a cloth & leave for 24 hours. Strain & pour into screw-top bottles that have previously held a sparkling drink. Screw on the caps tightly & leave for two to three weeks before sampling so that it develops a 'fizz'. Store in a cool place. Drink within 3 months.

[She says you can use, fresh, frozen or even dried elderflowers so the drink can be made all year round.]

Elderflower Sorbet (submitted by Goxhill, adapted from 'The Shirley Goode Kitchen' [BBC Publications 1986])

5 oz [150g] granulated sugar

6 fl oz [175 ml] elderflower champagne

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 egg white

2 tablespoons icing sugar

Put the granulated sugar and 4 fl oz [100 ml] water into a pan and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Boil for about 5 minutes until it has thickened to a syrup. Cool. Stir in the lemon juice & elderflower champagne & pour into a container. Freeze for 1 hour until it begins to crystallise. Scrape out the mixture into a bowl & beat well. Return to the freezer for half an hour. Repeat beating /freezing 2 or 3 times more. It's a fiddle but worth it. Finally beat the egg white until stiff & then beat in the icing sugar a little at a time. Fold this into the frozen elderflower mixture after its last beating, then return to the freezer. Allow to soften slightly in the fridge before serving.

[I think it will be a lot easier with my ice cream maker!]

Elderflower Vinegar (submitted by Goxhill, adapted from 'Cattern Cakes and Lace - A Calendar of Feasts' by Julai Jones and Barbara Deer)

10-13 sprays of elderflower

1 pint/600ml white wine vinegar

Pick the flowers when they are in full bloom and snip the flowers from the stalks. Make sure they are insect-free too. Put the flowers into a jar, pack them down well and pour over the vinegar. Close, and leave in a sunny place for 2-3 weeks, then taste to see if the flavour is sufficiently developed. When it is ready, strain and decant the vinegar into bottles and store in a dry cupboard.

Elderflower Cordial (submitted by Goxhill)

25 elderflower heads in full bloom

3 oranges

1 lemon

2 oz citric acid
1 bag sugar
3 pints water

Boil water. Add sugar and stir until dissolved then let cool a little. Slice up oranges & lemon, and add all ingredients to syrup. Stand 48 hours, stirring occasionally. Strain and bottle.

Another Elderflower Cordial (submitted by Gavin)

I make some for fresh, and put a couple of bottles in the freezer for happy memories and optimistic dreaming at Christmas and New Year.

Ingredients:

20 elderflower heads (or more);
1 lemon (sliced);
2 tsp citric acid (I use a second sliced lemon instead);
3.5 lb sugar;
2.5 pints boiling water.

Put all the dry ingredients into a clean pan. Pour boiling water over. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Skim. Cover with a cloth or lid. Stir twice daily for five days. Strain and bottle in clean sterile bottles.

The cordial can be frozen in plastic bottles (leave space for expansion). Fresh cordial can be refrigerated for up to two weeks.

Dilute with water, sparkling mineral water or lemonade and serve with slices of lemon and sprigs of mint. Add gin and soda water, or vodka.

Sallys Simple Elderflower Cordial (submitted by Sally in Wales)

I used to faff around with complicated recipes, these days I do it this way:

Boil sugar, water and a bit of lemon juice to get a medium sugar syrup. Cool
Go and pick elderflowers. Soak them in the syrup overnight.
Strain.
Bottle (keep in fridge! this recipe is not sterile!)
Add to water for quick elderflower cordial.