



### **Elderflower Cordial**

The feeling of summer stored in a drink! Here we go through how to make a quick elderflower cordial over the fire with a group to be drunk the same day or very soon after. There's a fairly short window in the year for celebrating the Elder in prime bloom, usually at the end of May into early June.

### **Properties**

There are poisonous look alikes to Elderflowers so please do watch our additional video pointing out some of the ways to be sure you're gathering the right flower heads for this. Elder has many medicinal properties with different parts on offer in different seasons.

- Elderflowers are one of the best herbs for encouraging sweating to break a fever
- Elderflower tea or cordial can help with fevers, colds and hayfever
- It's best to pick elderflowers on a sunny day, choosing those that smell lemony and fresh.

### **Ages**

All

### **Duration**

1.5 hours minimum

### **How To**

- Be clear on the identification of Elderflowers before you begin
- Gather the elderflower heads from the trees in a respectful way - leave plenty to turn into berries later in the year and for insects and birds. Look for the flower heads that are open but not yet looking brown or dried. Check their smell out and this is another helpful way to be confident they're elderflowers.
- Pluck the flowers off of their stalks and add them into a pot of hot water over the fire. It's best to have a flask or thermal jug of hot water to speed up this part of the process. Children can pluck the flowers into a cup and you can then add them to the hot water.
- Let this simmer for as long as you have time for in your session - you're effectively brewing a good elderflower tea at this stage. You can add some lemon slices to the hot pot to bring out that flavour.
- Once the pot has been on the fire for as long as you've got. Pour the liquid through a sieve into a receptacle (a bowl or or big jug works well). Add some sugar and lemon juice and test it for flavour and give it a stir.

*Disclaimer: The advice in this guide is considered to be correct at the time of writing, but Red Squirrel Resources accept no liability for actions inspired by these resources.*

- Add more sugar or lemon juice to taste, ensuring you can still taste the elderflower flavour coming through.
- Pour the Elderflower cordial into cups, allow to cool to an appropriate temperature and share with the group.

### Equipment Needed

- Gathered Elderflowers
- Lemons
- Sugar
- Sieve
- Thermal jug with hot water
- Pot and lid
- Trivet over fire
- Fire gloves
- Jug
- Cups enough for all

### Variations

- Make it your own by adding other ingredients: one suggestion is to add rose petals which gives another floral dimension and a richer colour.
- You can replace sugar with honey.
- Elderflower cordial that keeps for longer - you'll want to make this much stronger and then dilute small amounts as you use it. The recipe from Hedgerow Medicine by Julie Bruton-Seal and Matthew Seal includes:
  - Boil 1kg sugar in 2 litres of water for about 5 minutes in a large saucepan. Pour into a large bowl and add 50g citric acid, a chopped lemon and a chopped orange. Add 30 heads of elderflower you've gathered. Cover with a clean cloth and leave for 4 days, stirring daily. Strain through muslin.

You can then bottle and keep in the fridge for up to a month or freeze in ice cube trays for longer storage - this way you can defrost one drink at a time!

### Invisible Learning

- Connection to plants and their seasonal cycles
- Plant identification
- Nature observation
- Foraging
- Wild cooking

### Hazards to Highlight

- Misidentification of white umbellifers
- Burns

### Risk Assessment Considerations

These are the risk assessment consideration documents to be referred to for this activity.

- Plant Based Activities
- Fire Activities
- Site risk assessment (specific to your site)

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### Links

- [Elderflower Fritters](#)
- [Dandelion Fritters](#)
- [Cleavers Juice](#)

### Tags

- Wild cooking, foraging, plant activities, elderflowers, cordial, medicine