



Transition Worcester Elderflower Forage



Thank you for coming along to our elderflower forage! We hope you've had a great time. Both recipes used today are reproduced here for your own use.

The Elderflower Forage was organised by Transition Worcester's Food Group and the Parks team from Worcester City Council. The Food Group meets once a month (always the 2nd Wednesday of the month), in the relaxed setting of the Dragon Inn on the Tything. Join us at 19.30 for a chat about growing more of your own food, how to encourage others to buy more local food or whatever takes your fancy! We often also spend some time discussing and planning our next event – in the last few months, we've had seed and plant swaps, in addition to our elderflower forage.

Later in the year, we'll have fruit picking days, taking advantage of the abundance of fruit in Worcester. These are always good fun, and if possible, we'll also have a pressing machine to make delicious fruit drinks as well.

Please join our mailing list, look out for us on Facebook (Transition Worcester), Twitter (Transitionworc), or check out our website www.transitionworchester.org.uk for information about our latest events. Alternatively, give Ruth a ring on 01905 722056.

Elderflower 'Fizz' (Champagne)

Recipe courtesy of 'The Pasty Muncher' (www.pastymuncher.co.uk)

- Go pick half a dozen full elderflower heads ideally on a sunny day when they are most fragrant.
- Half fill a clean bucket with 10 litres of cold water
- Dissolve 1kg of white sugar into the water
- Shake any debris and insects clear from the elderflower heads and immerse in the water
- Cut two lemons in half squeeze juice into water and throw in the squeezed halves
- Add a splash (4 tablespoons) of white wine vinegar
- Stir gently and cover with a clean tea towel
- Leave for 24 hours stirring occasionally

After 24 hours, sterilise **plastic** carbonated drinks bottles – 10 x 1 litre lemonade/pop bottles are ideal – and strain jugfuls of the liquor through a sieve or muslin cloth into the bottles and screw the plastic tops on firmly.

Leave for a week and the naturally occurring yeast on the elderflower heads begins to ferment with the sugar creating a *very* weak alcohol content but lots of carbon dioxide.

NB I advise using plastic screw top bottles as personal experience and folk lore have taught me that homemade elderflower champagne causes problems if put in glass bottles (corks pop out resulting in sticky messes, glass bottles may explode – sticky mess plus glass everywhere...etc!)

If you use plastic bottles you will at least notice the stretching and rounding if the pressure becomes too great and can release the gas (or drink it).

If stored in a cool place and the bottles remain in tact, elderflower champagne can be kept for over a year – until the flowers begin to appear again for the next batch.

Elderflower Cordial (Recipe courtesy of 'UKTV' www.uktv.co.uk)

Ingredients

20 heads of elderflower
1.8kg of granulated sugar, or caster sugar
1.2 litres of water
2 unwaxed lemons
75g of citric acid

Method

1. Shake the elderflowers to expel any lingering insects, and then place into a large bowl
2. Put the sugar into a pan with the water and bring up to the boil, stirring until the sugar has completely dissolved
3. While the sugar syrup is heating, pare the zest of the lemons off in wide strips and toss into the bowl with the elderflowers. Slice the lemons, discard the ends, and add the slices to the bowl. Pour over the boiling syrup, and then stir in the citric acid. Cover with a cloth and then leave at room temperature for 24 hours.
4. Next day, strain the cordial through a sieve lined with muslin (or a new j-cloth rinsed out in boiling water) and pour into thoroughly cleaned glass or plastic bottles. Screw on the lids and pop into the cupboard ready to use.

Cooks Tips...

To serve Elderflower Cordial: Dilute the elderflower cordial to taste with fizzy water, and serve over ice with a slice or two of lemon, or a sprig of mint floating on top.

For something a touch more sprightly, add a shot of gin or vodka and a lemon slice, or add it to white wine and sparkling water to make an elderflower spritzer.

Elderflower cordial is also brilliant in recipes such as gooseberry fool, and in vinaigrette - mix with wine vinegar, a touch of mustard, salt, pepper and a light olive oil (surprisingly good with a courgette, lettuce and broad bean salad). You might even try adding it to a marinade for chicken breasts. Try it in sorbets, or ice-creams, or just spooned over scoops of vanilla ice-cream, or use it to sweeten and flavour the fruit for a crumble.

