

Blackberry and elderberry cordial

This delicious autumn recipe has been devised by my lovely neighbour Tricia Leopold who has spent the last few weeks gathering blackberries and elderberries growing in the fields and lanes of Eynsham. She has mixed many of the blackberries with apples and enjoyed them for breakfast, but there has been such an abundance of fruit this year she found she had enough to create other blackberry recipes - this glorious cordial is one of them.

You will need:

- 12 oz of both blackberries and elderberries (weight off the stalks, easily taken off using a fork)
- 8oz sugar
- Cinnamon stick broken up
- Pared rind of an unwaxed lemon and a tsp of cloves
- Citric acid approx. 2 heaped tsps.

Method:

- Place the washed berries in a pan with all other ingredients except the citric acid and cover with water.
- Bring gently to the boil and simmer for 20-30minutes.
- Mash the mixture with a potato masher or even better with a stick blender and leave overnight to infuse.
- The next stage is really messy as the mixture has to be strained. This can be done with a jelly bag or in a colander with a clean muslin cloth; It will take a long time as the mixture is very thick with seeds etc. Alternatively you can use a sieve and put the mixture in a little at a time, using a spoon to push the mixture in a little at a time. Push the mixture against the edges of the sieve in order to extract as much juice as possible – a large wooden spoon is perfect for the job.
- Once the juice has been extracted gently re-boil the mixture for a few minutes and then add the citric acid and pour into sterile bottles. It can be put into clean plastic containers and frozen or frozen in ice cube trays too.

To use: pour over ice cream, make into a hot or cold diluted drink, add to a fruit salad. It is said to be very good to both prevent and help fight colds and flu and can be taken like a medicine as a couple of undiluted teaspoons.

Tricia says she doesn't know how long it will keep in the fridge which is why she has frozen some. Be assured it is simply delicious.