

Basic Shrub Recipe

INGREDIENTS

2 cups fruit, cleaned, peeled, seeded, and chopped (if necessary)

2 cups vinegar

1 1/2 to 2 cups sugar

Additional ingredient ideas: ginger, lemon, lavender flowers

EQUIPMENT

Quart-sized canning jar or other glass container with a lid or cap

Deep pot

Measuring cups (liquid and dry)

Funnels (useful, but not required)

Saucepan

Food thermometer

Clean kitchen cloth or paper towel

Fine cheesecloth or coffee filter

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sterilize the container: Wash the canning jar in hot, soapy water and rinse thoroughly. Submerge in a pot of warm water to cover by 1 to 2 inches, bring to a boil, and boil for 10 minutes. For the lid or cap, wash it in hot, soapy water; rinse well; and scald in boiling water.

2. Add the fruit: Carefully remove the jar from the water using canning jar lifters or tongs and place on the counter. Transfer the prepared fruit in the container.

3. Add the vinegar: Place the vinegar in a saucepan and heat to just below the boiling point, or at least 190°F. Pour the vinegar over the fruit, leaving at least 1/4-inch headspace in the jar. Wipe the rim with a clean, damp cloth, and cap tightly.

4. Let it stand: Let the vinegar cool completely and then store the jar in a cool, dark place, such as a cupboard or the refrigerator. Let it stand at least 24 hours and up to 4 weeks until the desired flavor is reached.

6. Strain it: Strain the fruit from the vinegar through a damp cheesecloth or coffee filter. Do this at least once, or repeat as desired until the vinegar shows no cloudiness. Discard the fruit or save it for another purpose (it's often delicious for use in chutneys).

7. Add the sugar: Place the fruit-infused vinegar and sugar in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat and let cool. Pour into a clean, sterilized container (use the original mason jar or other bottles; see step 1 for sterilization procedure) and cap tightly.

8. Store: Store the shrub syrup in the refrigerator. Tightly sealed, it can last for up to 6 months. Taste before using to make sure the flavor is still good. Discard immediately if it has mold or any signs of fermentation, such as bubbling, cloudiness, or sliminess.

9. Serve: To serve, mix 1 tablespoon shrub syrup into a glass of still or sparkling water. Taste and add more syrup, if desired. Shrub syrups may also be used as cocktail mixers, in salad dressings, and more.