

Make Your Own Herbal Cocktails and Beverages

Herb Infused Simple Syrup

Herb-infused syrups can be used for sweetening and flavoring cocktails or non-alcoholic beverages, and will give your drinks a lovely scent and fresh flavor. To make an herb infused syrup, mix 1 cup of water and 1 cup of sugar, and bring it to a boil, stirring until all the sugar dissolves completely. Add your fresh herbs, and remove the syrup from the heat and cover with a tight fitting lid. Allow the syrup to cool while the herb infuses, then remove the herbs and strain into a clean jar with a tight fitting lid. You can play with the ratio of herbs to syrup, but some that I like include 4 or 5, 5 inch rosemary or lemon verbena sprigs or a handful of mint or lime balm.

Pineapple Sage Mojitos

Ingredients

- 1 lime
- 12 + 6 pineapple sage leaves
- 1/4 c sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 2 ounces rum
- tonic water
- ice cubes

Instructions

Make a pineapple sage simple syrup and allow it to cool completely.

In a pint glass, muddle 1/4 of a lime with 3-4 pineapple sage leaves. Add ice cubes.

Squeeze half of a lime over the ice cubes.

Add 1 1/2 ounces simple syrup.

Add 1 1/2 to 2 ounces rum.

Stir.

Top with tonic water. Enjoy!

Lemon Balm Spritzer

- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 cups warm water
- 1/2 cup lime or lemon juice
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup lemon balm, lightly packed, crushed
- lime or lemon slices
- 2 cups cold sparkling water

In a large pitcher, mix honey and warm water well. Add lime/lemon juice, 1 cup cold water, and lemon balm. Smash lemon balm in bottom of pitcher. Add lime/lemon slices and refrigerate mixture until chilled. Add 2 cups of cold sparkling water. Strain into individual glasses over crushed ice. If desired, stir 1 oz light rum or gin into each glass.

Using Homegrown Stevia

You will love growing your own stevia, because the homegrown, natural leaf has no unpleasant aftertaste. To harvest, simply cut long sprigs every time the plant begins to bloom. Hang sprigs to dry in your home, in which, if air conditioned, it should dry within a few days. Once dry, you may strip the stems of their leaves and place the leaves into a storage container with a tight fitting lid. To use, take a leaf and crush it fine between your fingers, directly into the beverage you are sweetening. It does not take much at all.

Lemon Verbena Liqueur

Lightly bruise a ½ cup of packed lemon verbena leaves. Place in a jar with a tight fitting lid, and add 2 cups of vodka. Allow to sit in a dark place two days. Add 1 cup of sugar and stir with a wooden or silicone spoon to dissolve sugar. Allow to sit in the dark for another two weeks. Strain and bottle. Allow to rest another two weeks before using.

Get Creative and experiment with the herbs in your kit and with other herbs! For more recipes, please visit our website, or join our online herb study group on facebook , the Appalachian Highlands Herb Society. Membership is free and open to all.

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