

THE WOMEN'S HERITAGE SOURCEBOOK



BRINGING HOMESTEADING TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Cooking • Herbalism • Canning • Fermenting
Beekeeping • Natural Beauty • Keeping Chickens
Milking Cows • Raising Pigs



Emma Rollin Moore • Lauren Malloy • Ashley Moore
with Audria Culaciati

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE



I first began making my own skincare and beauty products because I have very acne-prone, sensitive, difficult skin. I also wanted to avoid the toxic ingredients that are in practically every commercial product. Additional bonuses to making my own skincare include saving money, tailoring it to my wants and needs, and having the products I put on my body be as fresh as the food I eat. Making many of the products that I use on a daily basis also creates a wonderful self-care routine.

My favorite plants for beauty and personal care are calendula, rose, helichrysum, and orange blossom for topical applications. I also grow plants that I use internally for beauty, in teas and tinctures. These plants include burdock, calendula, and dandelion.

Homemade vs. Store-Bought

Most of the skincare options out there, even items at health food stores, are full of toxic ingredients. Many of the ingredients are preservatives, the benefit of which give the product a long shelf life, but only at the expense of your health. I like to compare skincare to food. The food that is best for your body is not the food that lasts the longest, but rather the food that is freshest, that must be consumed relatively soon. If you pump your food with all kinds of toxic preservatives, you can have it look the same and last longer, but you lose the nutritional value and also ingest poison.

If you consider this same approach when buying skincare, you will no longer be impressed at the lotion that still looks and smells new after 6 months of sitting in the hot car. You have to wonder why it has not gone bad in those conditions. The skincare I prefer is the kind that does get moldy after 6 months or a year, especially in conditions that are not ideal—just like the food I buy at the farmers market or harvest from my garden, which goes bad if I don't eat it within a few days. Shelf life comes at a cost, and I think it's important to realize what that is.

Unfortunately, the word *natural* on a label means very little and is not protected at all. Any

company can use it however it wishes. The word *organic*, however, is very protected and regulated; it cannot be slapped on any label. This can be a disservice, though, because many small companies (such as mine) cannot afford the prices and process of becoming certified organic and thus cannot put those words on the front of the label. Always check the ingredients list. There, any organic ingredients may be noted, even for the small companies that have not yet become certified. That said, it's better to make your own skincare. That way you can be sure the ingredients are safe and pure, and you can make it just the way you like it.

Drying Herbs

You can purchase already dried herbs to use in your skincare recipes, but truthfully they will never compare to your own freshly dried herbs. Drying your own herbs is remarkably easy. Most herbs will dry well if they are scattered in shallow baskets with plenty of airflow. Giving them a gentle stir or shake every few days will help discourage any chance of mildew.

You could also use a dehydrator on a setting at or under 100°F, checking them a couple of times a day. You will know when they are done because they will crumble in your fingers.

Another option is to hang herbs or flowers in small rubber-banded bundles upside down until they crunch and crumble a little in your fingers. I tie my herbs with string, but before I do, I use rubber bands to bind them because they lose their water content as they shrink. Without the rubber bands, many of them will fall out of their bundles as they dry.

As soon as your herbs are dry, store them in glass jars with tight-fitting lids. Their color, taste, and medicinal qualities will last much longer if you store them in a dark, dry, cool place, always out of any direct light from the sun. With proper storage, your herbs should stay in fresh, usable condition for at least a year.







Herbal Oils

Herbal oils can be used as is or as the base of many homemade personal-care products. There are two main techniques to making an herbal oil: solar and Crock-Pot. The solar technique is generally preferred over the Crock-Pot technique because the plants have time to give their healing gifts to the oil without losing strength due to heat. Oil also has the potential to go rancid if it becomes too hot. The only time I use the Crock-Pot method is if I need the oil quickly and cannot wait the 4 weeks it takes to let it infuse in sunlight. All oils are unique. Before you choose one, you should consider the qualities of each oil and compare them to your desired effects (see page 310).

SOLAR-INFUSED HERBAL OIL

The solar-infused method is by far the preferred method among herbalists to make an herbal oil. This method not only prevents the carrier oil from overheating, but also imbues the oil with the beautiful rays of the sun.

Dried herbs of choice

Base oil of choice

1. Fill a jar one-quarter to one-third full with your desired dried herbs. My favorite herb for skincare, hands down, is calendula (*Calendula officinalis*).
2. Fill the jar the rest of the way with your base oil of choice, leaving a 1-inch space at the top.
3. Cover the jar with a lid and give it a gentle shake.
4. Leave the jar in a sunny window, shaking once a day to keep the plant material covered in oil.
5. After 4 weeks, strain out the solids, reserving the oil. Now your infused oil is finished and ready to use in recipes or as is!

CROCK-POT HERBAL OIL

In very dark and cold climates, it just might not work to make a solar-infused herbal oil. Or perhaps you need your oil right away and can't wait the 4 weeks it takes to fully infuse in the sun. In either case, you can still make a lovely herbal oil using a Crock-Pot.

Dried herbs of choice

Base oil of choice

1. In a small Crock-Pot, add a ratio of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ part dried herb to 1 part oil.
2. Set it on the lowest heat setting and let it infuse for 24 to 48 hours.
3. You may need to periodically turn your Crock-Pot off to keep the oil from getting too hot and going rancid. Do not let it smoke or simmer. If your oil has gone rancid, you will know by the characteristic, waxy smell.



Favorite Oils for Skincare



Base Oils

The following oils can be used as the base oils for skincare recipes. Each oil can be used by itself, as the only oil in the recipe, or blended together with other oils.

JOJOBA OIL: Similar to skin's sebum; highly penetrative; absorbs very well; noncomedogenic; very helpful and regulating for acne-prone skin; helpful for sunburned or inflamed skin

OLIVE OIL: High in fat-soluble vitamins; repairs and rejuvenates damaged and dry skin; soothes inflamed skin; can feel heavy and greasy; slightly antifungal

ALMOND OIL: High in vitamin E and other fat-soluble vitamins; light texture; protective and nourishing; not too greasy; good for all skin types; often used in baby skincare

RAW (NOT TOASTED) SESAME OIL: Nourishing for dry and dehydrated skin; high in vitamin E; used to prevent sun damage and treat inflamed or sprained joints

SUNFLOWER OIL: Noncomedogenic; light texture; nongreasy; great for a variety of skin types

HEMPSEED OIL: Heavy but nonclogging; reduces size of pores; clears blackheads and acne; anti-inflammatory; reduces redness

APRICOT KERNEL OIL: Similar feel and use as almond oil; light and nongreasy; good for all skin types, especially prematurely aged, dry, or inflamed skin; astringent and toning

AVOCADO OIL: Fortifying and regenerating; one of the heavier fixed oils; more readily absorbed than olive oil; good for extremely dry, cracked skin, dehydrated skin, wrinkles, and premature aging caused by sun damage; high in vitamin E

COCONUT OIL: Solid at room temperature; light protection from the sun; greasy but very moisturizing; good for prematurely aged skin

ARGAN OIL: Typically used in haircare recipes, but also used on the face and body; high in vitamin E; antiaging and wrinkle-fighting; useful for acne-prone skin

Specialized Oils

These oils are used in combination with base oils and generally make up 15 percent or less of the final recipe.

CASTOR OIL: Not for use during pregnancy; anti-inflammatory; medicinally used externally in packs for heavy and congested periods, gastrointestinal cramping, and constipation (*Please note that the castor plant is highly toxic, and the store-bought oil has been processed to remove the toxin ricin.*)

ROSEHIP SEED OIL: Excellent antiaging properties; very high in vitamin C and other free radical scavengers; reduces scar tissue and damage from sun exposure; regenerates tissue

SEA BUCKTHORN OIL: High in vitamins, nutrients, and antioxidants; regenerates tissue; helpful for healing scar tissue; improves skin elasticity; anti-inflammatory







Face

I love making my own face-wash blends, and usually they don't require a lot of ingredients. Water is very important in any skincare routine, as it brings moisture to the skin, plumps it, and reduces the appearance of wrinkles. Even if you use an oil-based cleanser, it's important to wet a washcloth with very warm water and hold it over your face to open your pores and moisturize your skin. Follow the cleansing with a few sprays of hydrosol or flower water, four to five drops of serum, and lotion.

Aloe-Honey Face Wash

This face wash is so simple, and it works wonders for sensitive, dry, aging, and acne-prone skin. For an extra treat for your skin, make a mask of pure honey and leave it on for 10 to 20 minutes before rinsing it off with warm water.

1. Mix the aloe vera and honey, either in a small bowl or right in your hand, and massage into damp skin.
2. Rinse off gently with warm water, pat dry, and follow with a hydrosol, serum, and lotion.

¼ to ½ teaspoon aloe vera
1 teaspoon honey





Chamomile-Rose-Lavender Cleansing Grains

Another face wash I use often is cleansing grains. As with the calendula oil-based cleanser and aloe-honey face wash, it leaves the skin's natural protective barrier—the acid mantle—intact. The cleansing grains exfoliate without stripping moisture. A bonus feature is they can also be applied and used as a mask. I use bentonite clay in my cleansing grains, along with gluten-free oats and my favorite skin-nurturing herbs.

1. Grind all the ingredients in an herb grinder. You can also use a coffee grinder that hasn't been used for grinding or a mortar and pestle.
2. Mix together, and store in a glass jar with a tight lid. If stored properly, cleansing grains will last a few months.
3. To use as a cleanser, put a scoop of the cleansing grains in your hand and mix with a little water or hydrosol. Massage onto your face, and then wash off with warm water or a warm, wet washcloth. Follow with hydrosol, serum, and lotion.
4. To use as a face mask, apply as described in the previous step but leave it on until it is dry. Once completely dry, wash it off with warm water or a warm, wet washcloth. Follow with hydrosol, serum, and lotion.

1 cup organic,
gluten-free oats

½ cup bentonite clay

½ cup dried herbs
(any combination of
calendula, chamomile,
lavender, and rose)

HONEY CLEANSING MASK

If I have a little extra time, I like to mix up my cleansing grain mask with organic, raw, local honey and some hydrosol. This is the ultimate treat for your face. Blend a scoopful of cleansing grains with a tablespoon of honey and enough hydrosol to make it the right consistency—not too runny but not too dry to spread. Leave it on for 10 minutes before rinsing it off.



Herbal Facial Steam and Tea

Facial steams help keep your complexion glowing and vibrant. All the herbs can be used fresh or dried. This recipe is balancing and especially helpful for acne-prone skin. It can be used as a facial steam, or you can make it into a tea to drink. For best results, I would suggest doing both the steam and the tea.

Small handful of fresh
calendula petals

Small handful of
burdock root

Small handful of
dandelion root or leaves

Small handful of
peppermint leaves or
yarrow blossoms for
oily skin or violet flowers,
comfrey leaves, or
mallow leaves for dry
skin (optional)

Filtered water

Honey (optional)

1. Add the herbs to a medium-sized bowl.
2. Boil enough water to cover all the herbs in the bowl by 2 inches, and then pour the water over the herbs.
3. Position your face a comfortable distance away from the steam. (Careful: it can be hot.) For the most effective treatment, put a towel over your head and shoulders to keep the steam in. Breathe deeply and enjoy the fragrant steam for 2 to 8 minutes.
4. To drink this as a tea, combine 1 teaspoon of each herb. Boil 8 ounces of water, pour it over the herbs, and let it steep. Sweeten with honey if desired.





Antiaging Serum

Serum is my favorite part of my skincare routine. It helps my skin retain balance and moisture, and it fights the signs of aging. I use it at night after cleansing and spraying my face with hydrosol, but before I apply lotion.

¼ cup (2 ounces) jojoba oil
1 tablespoon rosehip oil
1 tablespoon sea buckthorn oil
10 to 15 drops helichrysum essential oil
5 drops jasmine or rose essential oil

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a small container. (I use a glass measuring cup with a spout.)
2. Store the serum in amber dropper bottles away from sunlight, heat, and moisture.
3. To use, after cleansing your face and spraying with hydrosol, apply four to seven drops of this serum to your face and massage until absorbed. Follow with lotion.



Age-Reverse Face and Body Lotion

A good lotion is an essential step in any skincare routine. It will help the skin retain moisture without clogging the pores and penetrate deeper layers of the skin rather than just floating on the epidermis. I learned how to make lotion many years ago from one of my teachers, master herbalist Rosemary Gladstar. This recipe is inspired by her wonderful lotions, and I encourage you to read her many books on skincare, as they are all truly excellent. I created this lotion to address the issue of my aging, sun-damaged skin, which is also quite sensitive and still very acne-prone. Please note that helichrysum is incredible at preventing and reversing signs of aging, but the essential oil is very expensive, so feel free to omit it if the cost is prohibitive. You will still get many antiaging benefits from the hydrosol.

1. Add the infused jojoba oil, sesame oil, sunflower seed oil, coconut oil, and beeswax to a double boiler on very low heat.
2. When melted, wipe all the water from the bottom of the top pan and set it aside.
3. In a high-powered blender, add the hydrosol, aloe vera, essential oils, and vitamin E, keeping the blades going at medium speed.
4. Carefully pour the melted oils and wax mixture into the blender. Blend until the two are fully combined, and then turn the blender speed down to low. You may see some drops of hydrosol on top, and some of the mixture may not have fully incorporated, remaining on the sides of the blender. This is all fine. Don't try to mix it in.
5. Quickly pour the lotion into very clean dark-colored glass jars. It will become more firm as it cools. (See the resources section in the back of this book for suggested jar vendors.)
6. After you've poured all you can into separate jars, scrape out whatever is left in the blender. This last jar of lotion is not ideal for your face, as it's not evenly incorporated, but it will work just fine as a body lotion. I try not to waste a drop of this liquid gold! Store all of your jars in a cool, dark place away from moisture. If the jars are sterile, they will last a minimum of several months.

¼ cup jojoba oil, infused with dried calendula petals

¼ cup sesame oil, infused with dried helichrysum blossoms

¼ cup sunflower seed oil, infused with dried calendula petals

⅓ cup coconut oil

2 tablespoons (½ ounce) beeswax pastilles

1 cup helichrysum hydrosol

2 tablespoons aloe vera gel

20 drops helichrysum essential oil

20 drops rose, geranium, or ylang ylang essential oil

20 drops jasmine essential oil

1 teaspoon vitamin E

TIP: You can combine the jojoba, sesame, and sunflower oils and infuse them with dried calendula petals all in the same jar if you prefer. I often go this route, as it saves time and I have fewer dishes to do in the end. However, if I am also making other things with each infused oil, I infuse them separately.





Lemon-Eucalyptus Body Scrub

Exfoliation is a very important part of every health and beauty routine. Your skin is the body's largest organ, and one of its major jobs is to help the body eliminate toxins. A buildup of dead skin cells makes this elimination difficult. Dry brushing is a really effective method of exfoliation. To do this, a special brush is used in long strokes on the body in the direction of the heart. Body scrubs are another wonderful way to exfoliate and enliven the skin.

1. Fill a half-pint jar one-third full with the eucalyptus leaves.
2. Pour the sweet almond or olive oil up to ½ inch from the top, put on the lid, and give it a shake.
3. Place the jar in a sunny window and shake it every day for 1 week.
4. After 1 week, strain out the leaves.
5. Next, put the sea salt in a large bowl. Add the eucalyptus-infused oil to the bowl.
6. Grate the skin of one to two lemons into the bowl and add the lemon or eucalyptus essential oil. Mix well.
7. Fill 4-ounce jars with your scrub and screw on the lids.

**⅓ cup eucalyptus leaves,
broken into small pieces
(optional)**

**1 cup sweet almond or
olive oil**

1 cup finely ground sea salt

**10 to 15 drops lemon or
eucalyptus essential oil**

1 to 2 organic lemons





Rosemary Hair Rinse

Rosemary is an excellent herb when it comes to hair, especially for those with dry scalps. Hair rinses can bring a shine to your hair and health to your scalp. They nourish the hair with the nutrients in the herbs and normalize the pH of the scalp, which can be helpful for anyone prone to dandruff.

1. Fill a jar with the rosemary sprigs.
2. Pour the vinegar to cover the rosemary.
3. Top with a plastic lid or wax paper under a metal lid.
4. Let the jar sit for 4 weeks, shaking once a day.
5. Strain out the solids, and reserve the infused vinegar.
6. For ease of use, I keep the infused vinegar in a bottle. When I'm ready to shower, I pour some into a big cup, about one-quarter full. I fill the cup the rest of the way with water. While in the shower, after shampooing, I pour the vinegar-water mixture over my head and massage it in. Then, I rinse it out and towel dry.

Handful of rosemary sprigs
Apple cider vinegar

HAIR RINSE VARIATIONS

CHAMOMILE HAIR RINSE

Chamomile also makes a good rinse. It is said to bring out the golden tones of blonde hair. Follow the directions explained here, but substitute chamomile for the rosemary.

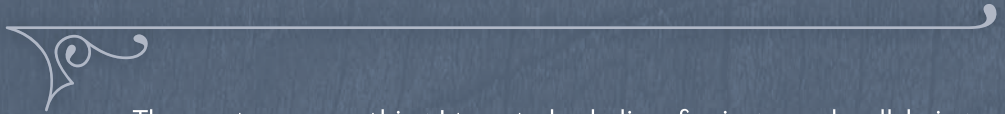
WILD AND WEEDY HAIR RINSE

Weeds are nutrient- and mineral-dense, and I love incorporating them into my life in as many ways as possible. I fill a jar with mallow root and leaf, nettle, and chickweed, and cover it with apple cider vinegar. After a few weeks, I strain off the weeds and feed them to my chickens. I then dilute the infused vinegar with water and use it as a hair rinse.





GENERAL WELL-BEING



The most common thing I turn to herbalism for is general well-being. Taking small amounts of nourishing, gentle herbs feels good to my whole system, keeps my skin looking healthy, and helps me feel my best. Herbs are powerful and work differently for each person. Explore which herbs work best for you and listen to your body as you discover their health benefits.

Herbal Tea

Herbal tea is my favorite form of herbal medicine. It's calming, relaxing, and most of the time delicious too. Most people are used to drinking teas made with commercial tea bags, but growing your own herbs for tea is more effective as medicine and much tastier. Even purchasing freshly dried herbs and making your own tea from them is preferable to the store-bought variety.

To make a tea with fresh herbs, such as peppermint, simply fill a heatproof jar at least halfway with loosely packed herbs. (I use a glass measuring pitcher or jar.) Then pour just-boiled water over the top. After a few minutes of steeping (letting the plants infuse into the hot water), strain out the solids, sweeten with honey or stevia, and enjoy.

To make a tea with dried herbs, put 1 heaping teaspoon of the herbs per 8 ounces of water into

TISANE

Tisane is the proper name for an herbal tea. The word *tea* is only technically correct when talking about the beverage made from the leaves of the tea plant. White tea, green tea, or black tea are all from the same plant (*Camellia sinensis*). The term *herbal tea* refers to a tisane, or infusion of plant matter from any other plant. Because I didn't grow up using that word, I usually refer to my tisanes as teas, even though that's not technically correct.

a heatproof vessel, pour just-boiled water over the top, and steep for a few minutes. Then strain out the solids, sweeten if desired, and enjoy. Alternatively, you could use a mesh tea strainer, French press, or make your own tea bags.

Fresh vs. Dried

I will always choose fresh tea rather than dried if it's available. The taste is unbeatable, and the herbs themselves are more potent. I only know of two medicinal herbs that must be dried before you use them because they are toxic when fresh: cascara sagrada and orris root. Everything else is better fresh when it comes to herbal teas. That said, it's not always possible or convenient to have fresh tea. Fresh herbs will quickly go bad if they are not used or dried. Freshly dried tea is the next best thing, especially when it's grown in your own backyard or by a local farmer. The recipes in this chapter all call for freshly dried ingredients, but if you have the fresh version on hand, feel free to use that instead. It will taste even better. The only benefit of using dried herbs is they can be made in larger batches and stored.



Herbal Tea Recipes

For each of these recipes, simply mix all the dried ingredients together, transfer the herb mixture to a glass container, and store it away from light and heat. These recipes are given in parts, or ratios, so they can be made in any size quantity, depending on how much you need and how much of each herb you have on hand. A good starting point is designating 1 cup as 1 part. Then you have a decent amount of tea, but not so much that it goes stale before you can use it. If you only want to make a little, you could even designate 1 tablespoon as 1 part. The choice is yours.

Love Tea

This tea tastes wonderful, and uses aphrodisiac herbs like rose petal (*Rosa spp.*), peppermint (*Mentha piperita*), and damiana (*Turnera diffusa*). To be honest, I never actually measure these herbs, and I use any combination of the three. If I'm out of peppermint, I'll use rose petal and damiana alone, and if I'm out of damiana, I'll use rose petal and peppermint.

1. Combine the rose petal, peppermint, and damiana.
2. To use, add 1 to 2 teaspoons to a tea infuser, French press, or heatproof glass pitcher. Pour 8 ounces of just-boiled water over the herbs and cover.
3. Let steep for a couple of minutes, strain, and then sweeten if desired.

1 part rose petal
1 part peppermint
1 part damiana



Pregnancy Tea

I drank this tea throughout all three of my pregnancies, sweetened with a little stevia. Red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) is the pregnancy herb. It is a uterine tonic, improves blood supply, and prevents postpartum hemorrhage. Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) is a blood builder and is full of nutrients. Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is extremely nutritious, and is helpful for anemia as well as thyroid deficiency. Oats (*Avena sativa*) are also nutritious, and are used to treat insomnia and nervous system irritation from exhaustion or stress. I add rose petals to surround the mama-to-be with love. This is a great tea to drink from the second trimester on, all the way until the end of breastfeeding.

1 part red raspberry leaf
¼ part alfalfa
1 part nettle
½ part milky oat tops
Handful of rose petals

1. Combine the red raspberry leaves, alfalfa, nettle, oats, and rose petals.
2. To use, add 1 to 2 teaspoons to a tea infuser, French press, or heatproof glass pitcher. Pour 8 ounces of just-boiled water over the herbs and cover.
3. Let steep for a couple of minutes, strain, and then sweeten if desired.

DRINKING VINEGAR VARIATION

You can make a delicious drinking vinegar (pictured) out of these herbs as well. Mix up enough to fill the bottom quarter of a glass jar, and then fill it the rest of the way up with apple cider vinegar. Put on a nonmetal lid, such as plastic or glass. (If all you have is a metal lid, put a piece of wax paper over the top before putting the lid on. This will keep the vinegar from reacting with the metal and making it rust.) Shake the jar once a day. After 2 to 4 weeks, strain out the solids. Mix your infused vinegar with equal parts honey and store it in glass bottles. When you feel like a refreshing, nourishing drink, add 1 or 2 tablespoons to a glass of water. It is so good!





Other Recipes for Well-Being

In addition to herbal teas, I also make tinctures, elixirs, and syrups to support overall health. The benefit of these forms of herbal remedies is that they have a much longer shelf life than tea, which only stays fresh for around 24 hours. Syrups last for a minimum of 30 days, and tinctures and elixirs last for many years, if not indefinitely. Once they are made, they can be quickly and conveniently administered.



Gotu Kola Tincture

This truly amazing tincture is one of my favorites. It reduces stress, increases energy and endurance, boosts hair and nail growth, and accelerates the healing time for wounds. I think it's so amazing that I grow the herb in my garden so I always have access to it. As a tincture, I take half a dropperful once a day. Please note that gotu kola is contraindicated during pregnancy.

1. Chop up the fresh gotu kola, and fill a jar two-thirds full. If using dried, fill your jar one-quarter full.
2. Pour the vodka over it to about ½ inch from the top.
3. Put on the lid, and shake the jar once a day for 1 week.
4. Let the jar sit for 3 more weeks, shaking occasionally, and then strain out the solids.
5. Bottle the tincture in 1-ounce dropper bottles.

Fresh or dried gotu kola
Vodka

Calming Hops Elixir

The cone-shaped fruits of the hops plant (*Humulus lupulus*) are used for this elixir. I use it for anxiety, a nervous tummy, and insomnia. I take half a dropperful one to three times per day for up to 2 weeks at a time. For this recipe, you can grow your own hops plant or order the dried strobiles from a local farmer or reputable online source.

1. Fill a jar two-thirds full with the strobiles.
2. Pour the vodka or brandy over them to cover.
3. Put on the lid, and shake the jar once a day for 1 week.
4. Let the jar sit for at least 3 more weeks. Strain out the solids, and then mix the tincture at a one-to-one ratio with local honey.
5. Bottle the elixir in 1- or 2-ounce dropper bottles and label them.

Dried hops strobiles
Vodka or brandy
Honey



Rose Hip Syrup

Every year in November or early December, I make rose hip syrup. Rose hips are one of the most concentrated sources of vitamin C, and I like to give a spoonful to each member of my family in lieu of vitamin tablets. This recipe also uses the petals of the rose and a few leaves of garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*). These add-ins are optional, but I love the extra complexity of taste they bring to the syrup. Honey is another main component of the recipe, and another one of my favorite medicines. I use it on cuts and scrapes, to soothe a sore throat, and as an ingredient in cough syrups. It is antimicrobial, making it an excellent preservative, and also contains important vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

You can order dried rose hips from reputable online companies, such as Mountain Rose Herbs. If you decide to use fresh, you will first need to prepare them. With a sharp knife, cut each rose hip lengthwise, scraping out the seeds and fine hairs and reserving the fruit. Once all the fruit is cleaned and seeded, you are ready to begin.

Sometimes I like to make the syrup extra special by infusing the brandy with rose petals. If you choose to do this step, fill a small jar with rose petals. Cut them up if they are fresh, or use a mortar and pestle to grind them up if they are dried. Then, cover the petals with the brandy. Put the lid on the jar, shake, and let it infuse for at least 24 hours or up to 1 month—or more if you'd like. When you are ready to make your syrup, strain out the petals and reserve the brandy.

4 cups filtered water or rainwater

2 cups cleaned rose hips (or 1¼ cups dried)

A handful of fresh or dried rose petals (optional)

2 or 3 garden sage leaves (optional)

1 to 2 cups honey

A splash of brandy (or rose petal-infused brandy)

1. Place the water and rose hips in a pot. Let it simmer until the water reduces by half.
2. Turn off the heat. Add the rose petals and sage leaves (if using), cover, and let steep for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Strain out and compost the solids, reserving the liquid. Return the liquid to the pot.
4. Add the honey and brandy to the pot and stir until combined.
5. Pour your syrup into sterilized bottles, and keep them in a cool, dry place or the fridge. Any leftover rose hips can be cleaned and dehydrated, and then stored in a glass jar with a tight lid. You can use these in your tea, or to make more syrup next time.

TIP: Easily harvested by holding a hip in your fingers and giving it a small twist, the rose hip is actually the fruit of the rose. It develops as a red, roundish seedpod after the petals drop off. You can use the hips off of your garden roses if they are not sprayed with any pesticides, or you can forage for wild rose hips in the late summer through autumn.



