Syrups and Cordials

Three methods of preparing juice for syrup making are described here, one hot and two cold, and the method used will depend on the facilities available in the kitchen.
Fruits for syrup making should be over-ripe, free from mould and well washed. Remove any leaves or largish stem.

HOT METHOD

a) Place the fruit in a basin and bruise well with a wooden spoon or pulper. Add about a dessertspoonful (2 teaspoons) of water and stand the basin in a saucepan half full of water and cover with a lid, simmer gently until the juice flows freely and if necessary refill the saucepan with hot water to prevent it boiling dry. When the fruit has been heated sufficiently repulp again. Alternatively, the fruit may be heated with a little water in an enamelled or aluminium saucepan. With this method the fruit should be kept stirred and mashed with a wooden spoon, as there is a danger of it sticking. Once the mixture comes to the boil only keep it over the heat for a few more minutes.
b) Squeeze the pulp in a jelly bag or through a thick cloth and to each pint add3/4 lb to 1 lb. Of white sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves and, if necessary, re-strain through organdie or several layers of muslin.
c) The syrup must now be bottled as soon as possible and sterilised to kill the yeasts present. The safest method is by heating the bottles of syrup in hot water. Fill the bottles to leave 1 ½ to 2 inches below the base of the cork or screw stopper, depending on the size of the bottles. if corks are used wire or tie them down strongly or else they will be forced out during heating. The corks or stoppers must be sterilised before using by submerging them in a deep pan of boiling water for fifteen minutes. Put the bottles in a deep pan fitted with a false bottom (i.e. a fish kettle) and pour in sufficient water to come to the bases of the corks. Heat the water to simmering point and maintain for twenty minutes. Take the bottles out and stand them on a plain wooden table to cool. Dip the tops of the bottles in melted paraffin wax or brush them with melted beeswax.

COLD METHOD

Syrups made by this method are fresher in flavour than hot processed syrups but they are slightly more difficult to prepare.

a) *Either* place the fruit in a bowl, crush with a wooden spoon or pulper and then leave covered with a thick cloth in a warm room. As soon as bubbles of gas form on the surface of the pulp press out by either of the methods given in (b) of the "Hot method" This incipient fermentation causes some breakdown of the pectin around the individual fruit cells and allows the juice to flow more freely

b) *Or* an alternative method for larger quantities of fruit is to use a commercial pectin destroying enzyme (PECTOZYME, sold in ½ lb tins by messrs. Norman, Evans & Rais Ltd., Woodley Stockport, Cheshire) Crush the fruit in a bowl and mix with 1/4oz of Pectozyme for each 8lb of pulp and leave overnight. For blackcurrants use ¼ oz for each 5lb and leave for two to three days, mixing once each day. The bowl should be covered with a thick cloth when the enzyme is working to keep out wasps and flies. The pulp is then squeezed out through thick cloth, sweetened, bottled, corked and sterilised as described in (c) of the "Hot method". Some fruits need the addition of citric acid as the syrups made from them seem to be a little insipid, where necessary it will be specified in the recipe. All syrups should be kept in the dark and as cold as possible to retain colour and flavour. Most syrups tend to throw a sediment of particles too fine to be retained in the straining cloths. The material forming the sediment is perfectly wholesome, but if a clear product is required, the syrup can be decanted from the bottle when used. No syrup should be kept for more than a year as flavour slowly deteriorates and in any case fresh fruit is then once more available.

APRICOT SYRUP

6lb apricots
3lb white sugar
3 quarts water

Boil the sugar and water together to make a syrup and remove any scum that forms. Drop in the stoned apricots and simmer until they are tender, replace any water that has boiled away. Remove the apricots and add a sprig of flowering clary (salvia officinalis) and simmer for a few more minutes. Strain, bottle and sterilise as detailed earlier
The apricots can be used later in a pie.

BLACKBERRY SYRUP

Stew the berries very gently in a double saucepan for an hour with water, using half a pint of water for every 6lb of fruit. Squeeze out the juice, add 1lb of sugar for each pint of juice and simmer for ten minutes. Allow to cool, bottle, cork and sterilise.
If preferred, a wine glass of brandy or a fruit liqueur may be added before bottling. Alternatively ad ½ oz of whole cloves in a muslin bag during the second simmering and remove before bottling.

BLACK CHERRY SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

BLACKCURRANT SYRUP

Either prepared as directed for blackberry syrup but using 1 pint of water to each 3 lb of fruit or by one of the cold methods.

DAMSON SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

ELDERBERRY SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

variation 1
Add Six cloves and a small piece of root ginger to each quart of unsweetened juice and simmered for ten to fifteen minutes

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variation 2
Add a teaspoon of allspice, ½ oz cinnamon stick and ½ oz of mace to each quart of unsweetened juice and simmered for ten to fifteen minutes

ELDERFLOWER SYRUP

Collect elderflowers in full blossom on a dry day and shake the florets into a preserving (jam making) pan approximately a quart is the minimum quantity required. Just cover with water, simmer for thirty minutes, making good any water boiled away, then squeeze out the juice and return it to the pan. Add ¾ lb of sugar for each pint of liquid and simmer again for ten minutes, skimming if necessary. Allow to cool, bottle , cork and sterilise.
The syrup can either be used as a base for a cooling summer drink or else for making water ices.

FRUIT SYRUP

Use equal quantities of blackcurrants, strawberries and raspberries and prepare using either the hot or cold processes

LEMON SYRUP

6 large lemons
4lb white sugar
2 pints water
½ oz citric acid
Dissolve the sugar in the slightly warmed water, add the lemon juice, finely grated rind and citric acid. Stir vigorously, leave twelve hours, strain, bottle and sterilise as directed earlier.

GRAPE SYRUP

Wash 16lb of well coloured grapes, drain and stem them into a saucepan. Cover with water and simmer until the juice is well extracted, stir well during this heating and make good any water lost. Pour into a jelly bag and leave overnight to drip, do not squeeze or else the juice will be cloudy. To each quart of juice add 1lb of white sugar, boil for thirty minutes, skimming and adding more water if necessary, then pour into heated bottles. Seal with sterilised corks immediately. Alternatively, the sweetened juice need not be boiled but sterilised as described earlier. Quarter fill a tumbler with the syrup and dilute with hot or iced water depending on the prevailing weather.

LOGANBERRY SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

MULBERRY SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

RASPBERRY SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

STRAWBERRY SYRUP

Prepared by the hot OR cold method

ORANGE SYRUP

6 oranges
4lb white sugar
3 pints water
1oz citric acid
Boil the sugar, water and grated orange peels together in an enamelled saucepan for ten minutes. Leave overnight, then add the acid and orange juice, strain, bottle, cork and sterilise as detailed earlier