

Tips for Juicing Small Berry Fruits (focus on Currants and Elderberry)

By Erin Schneider, Farmer, Educator Hilltop Community Farm, LLC

Adapted from Mehu-Liisa Juice Extractor and Steam Cooker Cookbook
www.juicer-steamer.com

1. Making Purees

A quick way to make purees is to steam the berries and fruit first to soften them up. Fruit will soften faster if chopped before steaming. Once soft, fruit/berries can be put through a food press or blender. Add any juice that forms during steaming to puree.

2. Juicing via Steam Extraction

1. For most small fruits/berries steaming will yield about 2-3 cups juice concentrate per quart of fresh fruit.
2. hint: As juice begins to form, draw off the first quart and pour it straight back over the berries. This will even out the sweetness and break up the berries, thus speeding up the juicing process.
3. hint: draw off the hot juice into carefully washed bottles/heat sterilized jars and seal/process in hot water bath for 20 minutes.
4. Save the pulp from the juicing process for use in
5. Feed the fruit pulp to your chickens – they will love you for life
6. You can also put pulp remaining from juicing process into blender or run through a food mill. You should have 5 – 5 ½ C pulp. Add 1 – 2 C honey or 2 C sugar to taste. Bring to a boil, simmer for 15 minutes stirring frequently. Pour into heat sterilized jars and process in hot water bath for 10 minutes. Makes about 8, 8 oz jars of jam.

***Black Currant, Raspberry Juice**

3 quarts of fresh currants
3 quarts of fresh red raspberry
**1 -2 C sugar (optional)

Wash berries, removing stems/debris. Steam for 60 minutes over rapidly boiling water (let water come to boil, then time it at 60 minutes before extracting juice). Drain juice into hot sterilized jars and top with lids/rings or bottle caps. We go an extra step and process in hot water bath for 20 – 25 minutes, though you can also cool on a rack in a draft-free location.

Makes 4-5 quarts of juice.

- *you can substitute red currants and/or black berry, or pretty much mix and match any berry – have fun experimenting). You can also just use currants instead of mixing fruits.
- ** We started off using sugar as per what the recipe called for then discovered then end result was a bit too sweet for the palette. Usually the raspberries will be sweetener enough for the fruit, though if you're going for a pure concentrate form, I would forego sugar and really let the fruit speak for itself. You can always dilute the concentrate with water to taste or add to your juice later.

Elderberry Pear Juice (one of our favorites!)

1. 6 lbs of fresh, ripe pears
2. 6 quarts of elderberry

De-stem elderberry (we sometimes freeze elderberry umbels and when we have time to juice later in the season, frozen elderberries more readily fall off stem/umbel). Cut washed pears in half and place in steamer basket layering elderberry/pears. Steam for 1 ½ hours (check to be sure water doesn't boil out of pan). Drain/extract juice into heat sterilized canning jars and lids. Use pulp for making jam. We go an extra step and process in hot water bath for 20 – 25 minutes, though you can also cool on a rack in a draft-free location.

Makes 4-5 quarts of juice.

While some recipes call for sugar, the pears make for an excellent sweetener and help take the 'bitterness edge' out of the elderberries.

Cost for Stainless Steel Mehu-Lisa Juicer/Steamer = \$199.00 plus shipping (from Amazon or you can contact/order direct from manufacturer at website above or contact@juicer-steamer.com). It's been instrumental for our fruit R & D especially with elderberries.

Other Fruit Tips: Some Simple Ways to Showcase Currants

Stumped with what to do with your bountiful currant harvest? Here are some easy ideas:

- Dehydrate the currants and use them anywhere you'd use raisins. They're especially tasty in scones.
- Sprinkle fresh currants into a salad or mix into your rice pilaf.
- Crush slightly and add to yogurt.
- Currants have a lot of natural gelatin in them, so just cooking them down with a little sugar will result in a sauce the consistency of cranberry sauce that is a nice accompaniment to everything from meat dishes or over ice cream.
- With their vivid color, clusters of red currants make a beautiful garnish. Freeze currants on the stem for year-round garnishes.
- Mix with other summer berries like strawberries and raspberries in your favorite fruit crisp or crumble recipe.
- Pop a few frozen currants into a glass of tonic or mineral water for a refreshing beverage.
- Add a handful into your favorite muffin recipe or anywhere you would use blueberries.

Black or Red Currant Chutney

From Marilyn Kharbush, owner of the Deli Bean Cafe in Reedsburg, Wisconsin. This flavorful chutney is a nice accompaniment to grilled chicken, beef or fish.

Ingredients

1 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup cider vinegar
2½ cup black or red currants (or a combination)
1/2 medium onion, chopped
2 green/tart apples, chopped
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. allspice
1/4 tsp. cloves

1/2 tsp. ginger

Directions

Boil water, sugar and vinegar for about two minutes.

Add currants, onion, apple and spices.

Bring to boil and simmer, being careful not to burn mixture. Cook over low heat, stirring often until mixture starts to thicken, about 15 minutes. It will thicken more when it cools.

Put chutney in jar or bowl, cool, and refrigerate up to one month.

Marketing Resources

The Cornell Fruit Resources:

www.fruit.cornell.edu

What's Wrong with my Fruit Garden? 100% Organic Solutions for Berries, Trees, Nuts, Vines, and Tropicals (Ti'mber Press, 2013) by David Deardorff & Kathryn Wadsworth

The Berry Grower's Companion (Timber Press, 2005) by Barbara L. Bowling

Currants, Gooseberries, and Jostaberries: A Guide for Growers, Marketers, and Researchers in North America (CRC Press, 2005) by Danny Barney and Kim Hummer

Katie Creeger, Kestrel Perch Berries

www.ithacaberries.com

1 Compiled by Erin Schneider Hilltop Community Farm www.hilltopcommunityfarm.org for NC SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Final Report, *Direct Marketing Non-Traditional Perennial Berry Varieties: Expanding Eater Preferences and Grower Connections* 2014.