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ELDERFLOWER / CHAMOMILE SALVE

For minor skin irritation, itchy bug bites, eczema

What you will need:

- 10-12 Small glass jars or metal tins
- Double boiler, or small pot and metal bowl
- Pyrex measuring cup (pint-sized)
- Stainless steel mesh strainer
- Almond, grapeseed or olive oil
- Dry elder and chamomile flowers
- Beeswax (approx. 1oz by weight)
- Vitamin E oil, Rosehip seed oil, Evening primrose seed oil (optional)

Infuse in a double boiler:

10 fl.oz. Sweet Almond (or Grapeseed, or Olive) oil

3 TBS. dried elder flowers

2 TBS. dried chamomile flowers

1 fl.oz. elderflower tincture (optional, but does make the salve more potent)

After 15-30 minutes, strain through a double steel mesh. Clean out your double boiler with a clean cloth. Return the infused oil to the clean double boiler. Add:

1 oz (by weight) beeswax

Allow all ingredients to melt. Pour melted hot salve into a measuring cup. Add:

¼ tsp. Vitamin E oil; ¼ tsp. Evening Primrose seed oil; ¼ tsp. Rosehip seed oil

Stir quickly and well. Bottle.

(Created by Guido Masé, Chief Herbalist, Urban Moonshine, September, 2016)

UVM Extension helps individuals and communities put research-based knowledge to work.

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Destemming and Cleaning Elderberries

Elderberries are very fragile and do not store well. Fresh berries must be refrigerated within four hours of harvesting, and frozen or dried within five days of refrigerating to prevent degradation in quality. Frozen berries will last for a few months—the anthocyanins—which give the berries their purple pigment and are responsible for much of their health giving properties are fragile and will degrade with repeated freezing and thawing, resulting in brown fruit with reduced health benefits.¹

De-stemming can be done on fresh or frozen berries, manually or mechanically. While there are a couple mechanical destemmers on the market for small-scale growers, these are still in the prototype phase and will be cost-prohibitive for most small-scale producers, thus, the majority of smaller growers will be processing by hand.

There are a few different techniques for de-stemming by hand. Growers may want to experiment to see which method works best for them.

Destemming Method I: Knock against harvest container: When harvesting each cyme in the field, knock it gently against the side of a rigid harvest bucket. The ripe berries should fall into the bucket, leaving the unripe berries still attached to the cluster.

Destemming Method II: Screening: The second method is to rub the berries against a hardware cloth screen. Make a stationary frame, cover with 1/2 by 1/2 in stainless steel "hardware cloth" to create a screen. Then place the screen on a collection vessel, put a quantity of fresh berries still attached to the cymes on the screen, and gently manually rub the berries across the openings of the screen. The berries will separate from the stems fairly easily. After the berries are de-stemmed they can be washed.

Washing: Berries from both Method I and II can be washed. Wash the berries by putting the berries in one container, and placing the container with the berries in it inside a larger container (e.g. placing a bucket or bowl inside a sink or tub). Add water to the container with the berries in it. As water is added into the smaller container, the heavier ripe berries will sink to the bottom of the container while insects, debris and unripe berries will float to the surface and can be skimmed off. The remaining ripe berries can then be drained on a screen.

Destemming Method III: Destem frozen berries: A third option is to freeze the berries while still on the stem in plastic bags. After the berries have fully frozen, manipulate the plastic bags with the frozen berries inside them by rubbing the bags with your hands until the stems float to the top. The frozen berries can then be placed on a screen and shaken to separate them from the stems. The berries can be screened and refrozen. It is best to do this with small batches of berries at a time to try to prevent them from completely thawing.

1. Byers, Thomas, Cerusca, Godsey and Gold, 2014. [Agroforestry in Action: Growing and Marketing Elderberries in Missouri](http://www.agroforestryinaction.org/growing-and-marketing-elderberries-in-missouri). University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry

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