

Rose-hip Syrup - 1946 Brew

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Health Department)

HERE we are once more on the thorny subject of rose-hips. Some may have dark thoughts of using the sugar shortage as an excuse for not making any rose-hip syrup, but we have them on the hip, as it were, by giving out our new recipes which do not contain much sugar, recipes for syrups that the adults will appreciate for cool drinks and that the babies need for preventing scurvy. It is a reflection on a country that is supposed to be enlightened that now and again we find a case of infantile scurvy turning up in our hospitals—there should be no such case, for it means that the child has had no vitamin C for months.

We have published several recipes, e.g., in "Good Nutrition," "Recipes for Many Races," and the Food Value League Bulletin for February, 1946. Here is one in which the sugar used is almost negligible. It is based on the fact that the chief acid in rhubarb is malic, the same as is found in apples; the oxalic acid present in rhubarb is removed by precipitating it with calcium carbonate. The acid helps to sterilise the syrup and to maintain both the sterility and the vitamin C; it also gives the syrup a better flavour. The sugar is partly replaced by lactose, the objective being to make the syrup less sweet, as well as to conserve supplies of sugar. The presence of the sugars helps to stabilise the vitamin C, i.e., prevent it from deteriorating in value.

Recipe, or R/-, for this is a prescription!

4lb. rose-hips. ½lb. cane sugar.
2lb. rhubarb. ½lb. sugar-of-milk.
1 level teaspoon of precipitated calcium carbonate.

Use only aluminium or enamel pans; avoid the use of copper-containing utensils. If the syrup is used only for the baby, use small bottles. Wash the rhubarb well. Use only the stalks. Use two pints of water for cooking the rhubarb. Strain through a jelly-bag and collect the juice. Mince the rose-hips and put them as you do them into 4 pints of water from the cold tap. Add the cooled rhubarb juice, and allow to stand for 24 to 36 hours, stirring occasionally. Squeeze the liquid through a colander or coarse bag. Then allow the fluid to drip through a jelly-bag. Put in a pan and add the sugar-of-milk. Boil down for 10-15 minutes. Add the cane sugar and the calcium carbonate (it froths at this stage). Skim. Boil again for five minutes or so, until it measures 3½ pints. Bottle hot in small sterilised bottles and add sterilised corks. (Corks should preferably be new ones. Old ones require at least an hour's boil under the water—keep them under with a weight, a pot lid inside the pot, or a soap-saver). Seal with paraffin wax and store in a cool, dark place.

Alternative recipes using lemon-juice, or using apples, may be obtained from your local Plunket Nurse, or your local district health nurse.

The precipitated calcium carbonate will come in handy for other things, e.g., halve the sugar you need to add in rhubarb or plums or gooseberries by putting in a level teaspoon of calcium carbonate to the pound, after the fruit is cooked. The calcium carbonate does not impair either the taste or the vitamin C content.

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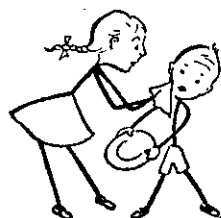
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