



LANCASTER CANAL
TOWPATH TRAIL

Elderflower Cordial

Harvest ingredients: May-June

Ingredients (for approx 2 litres):

- 10 large elderflower heads
- 1 lemon (sliced)
- 2 litres water
- 800g sugar

You'll also need:

- Muslin cloth
- Glass bottles or jars (sterilised with boiling water)

Method:

1. Check elderflowers for dirt and insects. Gently shake them off or remove by hand, but don't wash the flowers.
2. Add elderflowers, lemon and water to a big saucepan. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat.
3. Cover the pan and let the ingredients infuse overnight
4. Strain the mixture through a muslin cloth to remove flowers and stalks. You may wish to line a sieve or colander with the cloth, and pour the mixture through it.
5. Return the liquid to the pan, add sugar, and bring to the boil, stirring frequently. Summer until all the sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes.
6. *Carefully* transfer the cordial while still hot, to sterilised glass bottles or jars. Leave to cool.
7. Use cordial within 1 week. Serve diluted 1:5/1:10 (depending on personal preference) with water or sparkling water.

Star Ingredient:
Elderflower



Elderflower

Elderflowers grow on elder trees, and are best picked in May-June. Elder can be found all along the Lancaster Canal, even in towns and cities. Legend has it that planting elder near your house will keep the devil away!

Elder has a short trunk, grey-brown bark, and each leaf is made up of 5-7 pairs of "leaflets". The leaflets are oval-shaped with small teeth (serrations) along the edge. The flowers themselves are small and creamy white, with 5 petals, arranged in clusters. They are also very aromatic; you may smell them before you see them. Elderflowers are best picked on a warm, dry day when the buds have freshly opened (before they turn brown). Use a pair of scissors to snip off a whole cluster or "head" of flowers, and stash in a bag or basket.

Tip: only take what you need – leave some flowers for pollinating insects, and so berries can develop later in the year.



Elderflowers and leaves. Photo credit: Carrie House