

Facts and Folklore

In Autumn, the dog rose produces bright red berries called hips.

During WW2 the UK Ministry of Health and County Herb Committees organised the collection of rose hips for the production of rose hip syrup. This syrup is very high in vitamin C and was a good substitute for lack of fresh fruit and was also given to ward off colds.

Children used to play tricks on each other by taking the insides of rose hips and putting them down each other's shirts. The insides are like itching powder so rosehips were sometimes known as itchy-backs, cow-itches and ticklers.

The Grimm Brothers' heroine Sleeping Beauty is often known as Rose Red or Briar Rose. In Slovak, Czech and Hungarian she is known by the nicknamed form of Dog Rose, which is Csipkerózsika in Hungarian, Šípková Ruženka in Slovak, Šípková Ruženka in Czech.

The Latin name of Dog Rose is *Rosa canina*. 'Canina' is derived from the ancient Greek belief that a tincture from the root was a cure or the bite of a rabid dog!

It's likely that the plant's sharp spines, which resemble a dog's canine teeth and have the potential to damage the skin inspired the common name.

The dog rose is also known as the cock bramble, wild rose, hip rose and referred to as 'eglantine' by Shakespeare.

Dog rose is the most widespread of the wild rose species.

The fruit of the dog rose is called rose hip, and it is used in many traditional recipes.

Rose hips contain more vitamin C than lemons.

To store rose petals for later use, it's a good idea to dry them out. Here is how to dry them using an oven:

Collect fresh rose petals in peak bloom that haven't been treated with chemicals or damaged.

Preheat the oven to 200°F.

Wash the petals gently and drain them well.

Line a baking sheet with baking paper, placing the cleaned petals in a single layer on the sheet. Make sure you remove all traces of stems.

Bake the petals until they are dry and break apart like potato crisps. If they still seem flexible, bake for another a few minutes and test again.

Once the petals have dried, store them in an airtight container in a cool, dark place.



Recipes

ROSE HIP SYRUP

Ingredients

1kg rose hips, 3 litres of water, sugar

Method

Trim the hips from their stalks and wash them.

Sterilise a couple of bottles and their tops – you can do this in a hot oven, in the dishwasher or in the microwave.

Roughly chop the rosehips and transfer to a large, heavy based saucepan. Add the water, bring to the boil, then turn the heat down and simmer for 15 minutes.

Strain the mixture through a double layer of muslin cloth, letting the pulp sit for a good half hour so that all the juice passes through.

Wash and reuse the muslin, or use a fresh piece; fold it and pass the strained juice through it again. The double strain is important as it removes anything that could irritate the digestive system.

Measure the rosehip juice back into the cleaned saucepan. For every 500ml, add 325g sugar.

Heat slowly until the sugar has dissolved, stirring constantly and then bring to the boil for 3 minutes, skimming off any scum if necessary.

Immediately pour into the sterilised bottles.

To add colour and fun to summer drinks, add rose petals to ice cube trays and serve with a sprig of mint.

Always strain rose hip recipes twice, through double muslin layers. This ensures no hairs or seeds can be left in the recipe.

ROSE HIP JAM

Ingredients

1kg of wild rose hips, 1 litre of water, 340g sugar, 1 fresh lemon

Method

Wash the hips and remove the leaves and stalks.

Carefully cut each washed and dried rose hip from both sides, open it and remove all the sticky seeds. Do not leave any seeds to end up in the jam.

Place the hips in a heavy based saucepan and boil until soft – around 40 minutes.

Press the mixture through a fine sieve and return it to the rinsed-out pan.

Add the sugar and lemon juice to help preserve the colour. Boil, stirring every few minutes, until the mixture is thick like cream, and glossy.

Test the jam using a cold plate; when it has cooled on the plate it should have a slight movement.

Add to clean, sterilised jars and store in the fridge.

Store rose hip recipes and concoctions in the fridge, especially once they are opened. They should last for around 4 months, unopened.

Rose hips must not be eaten raw. Always strain rose hip juice and remove any hairs or pips that could irritate the digestive system.

Recipes

ROSE PETAL HONEY

Rose petals are antiviral, antibacterial, and antiseptic, qualities that can help to relieve a sore throat.

Ingredients and equipment

Rose petals, honey, sterilised glass jar, wooden spoon

Method

Place the rose petals in a glass jar and cover with honey. Stir to make sure all the petals are covered. Add the sterilised lid and leave to infuse for 6 weeks in a cool place such as a larder or fridge.

Strain off the petals after 6 weeks by pushing through muslin.

Store in a cool place and add to warm water or tea at the first sign of a sore throat.

ROSE PETALS

are edible, and can be added to many dishes to create quirky touches with their scent, texture and colour.

For example, spread peanut butter or jam on toast, and then sprinkle fresh petals on top.

Have fun experimenting with rose petal toppings on crackers and salads, and decorate the edges of plates.

SUGARED ROSE PETAL DECORATIONS

Ingredients

Unsprayed edible rose petals, 1 large egg white, 100g caster sugar - or grind granulated sugar until finely ground but not powdery.

Method

Carefully pluck individual petals from the flowers. Gently wash the petals, trying not to bruise them. Place the petals on kitchen paper and leave them until completely dry.

Place a wire cooling rack on a baking sheet.

Whisk an egg white in a bowl. Spread the sugar onto a plate.

Using a brush, paint each rose petal with the egg white and then place the petal in the bowl of superfine sugar, turning it to coat both sides and sprinkling on extra sugar if necessary, so the petals are completely coated with sugar. Space the candied rose petals apart on a wire rack and leave until dry and hardened.

The Dog rose's petals can be used to make tincture or rose water.

An easy cold tea or tincture can be made with dried rose petals. Prepare the tea by pouring boiling water over the petals and letting it infuse overnight.

Strain the liquid through muslin and store in the fridge. This tea is said to help with stomach cramps.



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Playful springboards: DOG ROSE

FLOWER NAME CHALLENGE

Flowers are often used as baby names – for example, Jasmine. Beginning with A and working as far through the alphabet as possible, recall a flower name beginning with each letter.

Flower feedback

Use the characteristics of a rose to facilitate feedback after a session playing or working together.

Give everyone time to reflect on their experiences in the group and think about:

THORN: a woe from the day

ROSE: a joy from the day

BUD: something that will happen next (bloom!)

Facilitate the feedback, starting with the 'thorns', then the 'roses' and finally the 'buds', which help the session end on a positive note.

These prompts allow participants think deeply about their experiences and take time to share their emotions.

PASS THE ENCHANTED ROSE

This game is based on the falling petals from the enchanted rose in the story of Sleeping Beauty. Gather several roses (watching out for the thorns).

All the players sit in a circle.

Hand a single rose to the first player, who removes one petal and passes it to the left. The next player should do the same and so on around the circle.

The player who removes the last petal from the enchanted rose is out of the game.

Hand a new rose to the remaining players and repeat the same process.

Keep playing until the last player picks the last rose petal.

Games + activities

FLOWER PRESSING

Equipment

Flowers, pieces of paper, heavy books

Instructions

Choose a selection of flowers to press – it could be whole flowers, petal, buds or leaves. Arrange them between sheets of paper and then place heavy books on top of the paper.

After a few days check progress – keep checking until the flowers are flat and completely dried out.

Use the flowers for craft projects.

MINDFULNESS

Go out for a walk with a friend, and look for a dog rose. While searching, notice the ambient sounds, smells and the sights on the route. Share your thoughts with your friend. Once the dog rose has been found, stop and inspect it, silently, for a minute. Try not to think about anything but the rose and its unique features.

Now, take a little piece of the plant in your hand and hold it gently. Sit down, close your eyes for two minutes and tell your friend what you feel.

Finally, deeply inhale the smell of the flower. Lie down, silently, for three minutes, being aware of your breathing and your friend's breathing too.

After the mindful observations of a rose, reflect on the experience and write or draw something to express what you saw or felt.

While doing this, listen to some relaxing music and try to focus on doing only this one thing for about 15 minutes.

Once finished, present your work to your mindfulness buddy.