

RECIPE FROM THE HISTORIC KITCHEN

STRAWBERRY AND RASPBERRY SHRUB

ORIGINAL RECEIPT

The Ladies of Galt, *The Galt Cook Book, Comprising A Large Number of Tested Recipes for the Kitchen, Dining Room and Sick Room*, Margaret Taylor and Frances McNaughton, eds., (Toronto: William Briggs, 2nd ed., 1898), p. 377. (Republished as *The Early Canadian Galt Cook Book* by Coles Publishing, 1974.)

"On four quarts of berries pour white vinegar enough to barely cover them. Let them stand for forty-eight hours, then drain off the vinegar, squeezing the juice out of all the fruit with the vinegar. If strawberries are used, the vinegar must be poured over a second supply of fruit before it will attain the proper flavour; but one supply of raspberries is sufficient. Measure out the liquor when it is ready, and to every pint allow a pound of sugar. Put it in a porcelain-lined kettle with the sugar and let it boil for ten minutes, then bottle it and set away in a cool place. A cupful of this syrup is sufficient to flavour a quart of ice water."

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Raspberry Shrub and Lemonade were the most popular fruit drinks of the 19th century. They owed much of their popularity to the Temperance Movement, which promoted them as non-alcoholic alternatives to beer and hard spirits. **Strawberry Shrub**, Cherry Shrub, Cinnamon Water, Barley Water and hot sugared tea were other alternatives. Raspberry and Strawberry Shrubs were also called Raspberry and Strawberry Vinegar. *Shrub* is an old Arabic word meaning drink and is related to *sharba*, the word for syrup. In Britain, shrub was originally a potent drink combining citrus juice, sugar and spirits. By appropriating the word shrub for her non-alcoholic raspberry vinegar drink, Eliza Maria Child in *The American Frugal Housewife* (1832) started a new trend in temperance drinks that continued until the mid-20th century.

The Galt Cook Book was a true Canadian publishing success story. Not only was the first edition, said the editors, "speedily absorbed in Galt and [the] neighbourhood", but it travelled around the world. Like so many cook books, this book was really a household manual, as its subtitle made clear." All the recipes were contributed by local women.

OUR MODERN EQUIVALENT

This beverage recipe halves and doubles well. It keeps indefinitely, provided the bottles are sterilized, then stored in a cool place.

A note about volume measurements: a dry quart of strawberries is 4 cups but a fluid quart of vinegar is 5 cups because it is an Imperial (British / Canadian) quart, not an American quart. For cooking purposes, the main difference between the 2 systems is the fluid pint. 1 Imperial pint is 2½ cups but 1 American pint is 2 cups. Since 2 pints equals a quart, then an Imperial quart is 5 cups and an American quart is 4 cups.

The British Empire adopted the Imperial measuring system in 1826, while the Americans retained the former system. The metric system was officially introduced to Canada in the mid-1970s. Choose one system.

We recommend a ratio of 1 part fruit syrup to 5 parts water, but depending on your tolerance for the sharpness of the vinegar and the sweetness of the sugar, you may want to adjust that. In her recipe for Raspberry Vinegar, Annie Gregory stated: "A dessertspoonful of this in a glassful of water will prove a refreshing drink." (*Canada's Favourite Cook Book*, 1902)

RASPBERRY SHRUB takes 3 days to complete:

4 L	very ripe raspberries	4 quarts
3 L	white vinegar	3 Imperial quarts (15 cups)
2 L	white sugar (approximately)	15 cups

First day:	<u>Pour:</u>	vinegar over thoroughly rinsed raspberries; cover bowl with cloth
	<u>Steep:</u>	for 48 hours (or more)
Third day:	<u>Drain:</u>	raspberry vinegar off fruit into a very large bowl
	<u>Transfer:</u>	fruit a bit at a time into fine sieve lined with cheesecloth placed over bowl of vinegar
	<u>Squeeze:</u>	cheesecloth gently to extract more clear juice from fruit, but don't squeeze so hard that juice is too pulpy
	<u>Discard:</u>	fruit
	<u>Measure:</u>	raspberry vinegar; you should have about 3.5 L (OR 3½ Imperial quarts; 17½ cups)
	<u>Combine:</u>	raspberry vinegar with sugar; "to every pint [2½ cups] allow a pound [2 cups] of sugar"
	<u>Heat:</u>	and stir to dissolve sugar
	<u>Boil:</u>	for about 10 minutes to concentrate flavour and create syrup
	<u>Skim off:</u>	any scum that may develop
	<u>Pour:</u>	hot syrup through funnel into sterilized bottles, leaving 2.5 cm (¼") headroom
	<u>Store:</u>	in a cool place, not refrigerator
	<u>To serve:</u>	"A cupful of this syrup is sufficient to flavour a [Imperial] quart [5 cups] of ice water."
	<u>Yield:</u>	approximately 3.5 L (OR 3½ Imperial quarts) of syrup

STRAWBERRY SHRUB takes 6 days to complete:

Strawberries don't have as strong a flavour as raspberries, so "the vinegar must be poured over a second supply of fruit" for the same yield of syrup. Follow the above directions, but steep 4 L (OR 4 quarts)

strawberries at first, then steep 4 L more (OR 3.5 Imperial quarts more) in the same vinegar. Add the same quantity of sugar and boil 10 minutes. The strawberries don't need to be hulled for this recipe.

Revised June 2001 a:\GALT shrub

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