



Christmas spirits

There are a great many misconceptions about wine and beer making that prevent many potential brewers from ever getting started. Despite popular beliefs however, amateur brewing is not difficult or dangerous or expensive, or time-consuming, illegal or smelly. Nor does homemade wine and beer made correctly taste like paint: It is on the contrary as good and often better than what you can buy.

Wine is best made in the fall when wild and commercial fruits are available but the Christmas holidays is a good time for brewing beer. By the time the price of beer goes up next Jan. 2, your home brew will be ready for drinking.

It is quite feasible to make wine and beer organically, eliminating the appalling list of some 30 chemicals that go into many commercial products (preservatives, stabilizers, clarifiers, heading agents, anti-foaming agents, etc.) The books and storeowners that insist on the necessity of ANY chemical are trying to sell a product.

The method given here involves no ingredients of questionable safety (except alcohol).

In the long run making your own booze is vastly cheaper than buying it because you avoid a large government tax. Once you have purchased the basic equipment (for about \$10) beer costs less than 5 cents per bottle and wine less than 25 cents a bottle.

Wine and beer are made by fermenting in two stages. The first stage is a rapid fermentation which because it produces a lot of froth must be done in a large plastic pail (called a primary fermenter). When the fermentation slows down, the booze is siphoned off of the sediment into glass jugs called secondary fermentors. In the case of beer, you wait until the fermentation slows down then add a bit of sugar and siphon into bottles. In the case of wine; you must wait two weeks, siphon the wine off the sediment, wait 2 months and

siphon it again. At this stage the wine can be drunk but will improve greatly after a few more months.

EQUIPMENT FOR BEER

1. Primary fermentor. A large plastic pail holding at least 6 gallons (4 gallons for beer and at least 2 gallons for the froth produced by fermentation).

If you intend to make wine someday, purchase a 20 gallon pail.

The choice of the container is important, the best material being a hard white plastic (hard to prevent unhealthful plastic substances from leaching into the booze and white to avoid perhaps hazardous dyes). Be sure that the container that you obtain is approved for food and drug use. (Even some plastics are not).

WARNING: Do not use a crock unless you are absolutely sure that it is not glazed with a compound containing lead (lead is poisonous). Do not use a metal container of any kind or an enameled metal container that is chipped. Otherwise poisoning by heavy metals such as zinc could occur. 2. Bottle capper and a supply of caps. 3. Secondary fermentor. Five one gallon glass jugs and a 1/2 gallon jug. Use only glass. 4. Syphon hose, 5 or 6 feet of clear plastic tubing (1/4 inch diameter) approved for food and drug use. 5. Sterilizing solution. One ounce of potassium metabisulphate dissolved in 1/2 gallon of water. This solution can be kept for up to 3 months in a 1/2 gallon jug with a screw cap. Avoid breathing the sulphur dioxide fumes.

BEER RECIPE

1 2 1/2 lb. tin of extracted malt
2 lb. white sugar (approximately 4 cups 1 oz.)
2 oz. dried hops
1 pkt. dried beer yeast
1 lemon (juice) (optional)
2 tsp. plaster of paris (also called gypsum or calcium sulphate) (optional) 1 pkt. yeast food (optional)
4 gal. water
2 tsp. unflavored gelatin

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thoroughly wash all equipment and sterilize by rinsing with sterilizing solution, then with tap water. The sterilizing solution can be returned to the jug and re-used. 2. Tie hops in a straining bag or cheesecloth and simmer in a large saucepan containing a portion of the water (at least 2 quarts) for 30 min. 3. Add the rest of the water (cold tap water) to the sterilized primary fermentor and cover with a plastic sheet. Care must be taken at all times to maintain the contents of the fermentor sterile. 4. Remove hops and dissolve sugar, malt, lemon juice and gypsum in saucepan. Bring to a boil to sterilize it. Then cool to body temperature. (If it is too hot you may kill the yeast). Add yeast nutrient and stir with a sterilized spoon. (Small pieces of equipment can be sterilized by boiling in water for 10 minutes). 5. Mix into primary fermentor and sprinkle yeast on top. 6. Cover with a plastic sheet and tie the edges down. (This is to prevent airborne microorganisms from spoiling the brew.) Place away from draughts at room temperature. 7. As soon as the froth thickens (a day or so), skim it off. Skim again if necessary at 12 intervals. 8. In 4 days or when froth no longer forms, use a sterile piece of plastic tubing to siphon the beer into sterile jugs, leaving sediment behind. Add 1/2 teaspoon of unflavored gelatin (dissolved by heating in a bit of beer) to each jug and wait 12 hours for the beer to clarify. During this time, place screw tops on the jugs but do not tighten the tops. You must allow the carbon dioxide gas to escape otherwise the jugs may burst. 9. Siphon again, leaving the sediment behind. Add 4 1/2 tablespoons white sugar to each gallon and siphon into scrupulously clean bottles. 10. Cap and set the bottled beer in an undisturbed place for a week or two. 11. To serve, chill and pour the beer off of the sediment in the bottle and into a glass.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Home Brewed Beer and Stouts

by C. J. J. Berry

The Complete Book of Home

Wine Making

by H. E. Bravery



For MEN Only

In this day of Women's Lib we're not often conscious of the way men are limited by our notion of "masculinity". One of the most unfortunate of the restrictions imposed on men is that they must not participate in the casual production of attractive things. We'll accept, even honor, a William Morris who makes a career of designing pleasant household things, but we are suspicious of a man who simply likes to make unpretentious things with his hands.

Almost without exception "feminine" crafts are domestic: they involve low-cost "household" materials and equipment and they make our every day life more comfortable and agreeable.

Let's stop pretending that the quality of our day-to-day surroundings is too trivial a topic to be considered by the profound male mind. And let's also banish the idea that there is something "female" about the relaxed, informal creativity of handicrafts.

Make this Christmas your escape from false masculinity. Be crafty. Be creative. Be free.

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