

## Elderflower cordial

*Such a classic English drink - it has to stay in imperial measures!  
Make this in May or June when elderflowers are at their peak. Pick on a sunny day in the morning and be fussy - you only want pleasant-smelling and perfect sprays, without a whiff of decay.*

*Recipes vary when it comes to the temperature of the water - some infuse in cold water and others in boiled; some then take the strained cordial to a boil and others don't. Clearly, the more you heat the cordial the better it will be preserved, but in my experience boiling the cordial also affects the flavour. So below is my compromise version. It should keep perfectly well for a few weeks if not months. To keep it longer, transfer to plastic bottles or tubs and freeze.*



### **Makes: approx 5 pints**

3 pints water

3 lbs white granulated sugar

2 oz citric acid (available from chemists)

2 lemons

1 orange

30 perfect sprays of elderflowers

1. Pour 3 pints of cold water into a large saucepan or bowl. Add the sugar and citric acid and stir until everything is dissolved. Zest the citrus fruits and then slice them and add both zest and sliced fruit to the syrup.
2. Inspect the flowers and remove any bugs. Snip off any leaves or large stems and let the sprays fall into the syrup. Give everything a stir and cover with a clean cloth. Leave 24-48 hours.
3. Strain the cordial through clean muslin or a scalded jelly bag and leave it to drip.
4. Meanwhile clean several glass bottles and place them in a cold oven. Turn the oven on to 140C. Once it reaches temperature make sure the bottles stay there for at least 15 minutes to sterilise. Leave them in the oven as you'll want to use them hot. Sterilise the lids by boiling them for 10 mins.
5. Put the strained cordial into a large saucepan and gently bring to a simmer. Do not boil. Simmer for a few minutes and then use a funnel to pour directly into your hot bottles. Seal and leave to cool undisturbed.
6. Store somewhere cool and dark. To serve, dilute to taste with cold still or sparkling water, gin and tonic, or prosecco!