Wild at Heart

Be wild, whatever your age

Blackberrying

Abundant and probably one of the best-known wild edible berries. You can find them growing everywhere - woodland, waste ground, footpaths, hedges and gardens. They have been eaten since Neolithic times.

There are 400 micro species in the UK and different clumps of blackberries can have a wide difference in taste. Some are sour and not good for eating, whereas some are luscious and juicy with a great taste.

In Scotland they are known as Brambles – where the thickets of blackberries and bracken were used as natural boundaries around a home.

Harvesting. I have been keeping an eye on the various black berry patches on my local walks, sampling a few berries as I go. It's the first few weeks of August now and the first berries are truly ripe.

The juiciest fattest berries are the first to ripen. As the season progresses the berries further up the stalks will ripen. But they aren't ever as sweet and benefit from cooking with other fruits. It is said its best not to eat blackberries after the first frosts in October.

Make sure you leave plenty for wildlife and for other people to enjoy.

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Blackberry Juice Junket

This is a simple way to enjoy the blackberry flavour in a pure and simple way. No sugar is needed. Time and warmth help the juice thicken to a sweet and satisfying thick sauce.

What you need

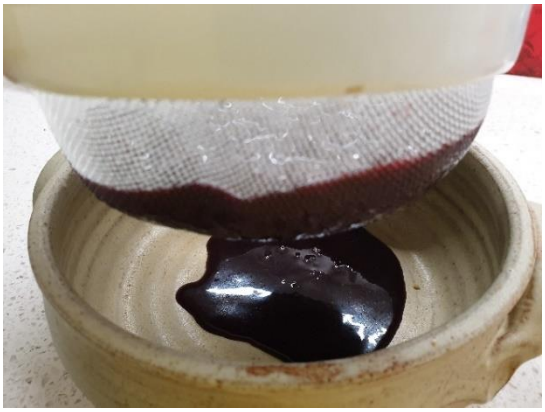
- A large bowl of very ripe blackberries
- Sieve
- Bowl
- Hand mixer / blender

Method

1. Pick fresh ripe blackberries and rinse in cold water.

2. Use a hand mixer, masher, or blender to release the juice.

3. Transfer mashed blackberries to a sieve placed over a bowl. Use a spoon to press the mash against the sieve to let the juice collect in the bowl.



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4. Once you have got most of the juice from the berries cover the bowl and place somewhere warm for a few hours. The liquid will set, there is no need to stir or add anything to this liquid.

You can use the leftover mashed berries to add into another recipe like a crumble, chutney or jam.

5. Once your juice junket has set you can enjoy it as it is or with cream, yoghurt or ice cream and a biscuit.

6. Keep in the fridge and use in 2-3 days.

More ways to use the blackberry juice junket

Add hot or sparkling water to make a fantastic drink

Add to hot buttered toast for a sweet treat

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