

Spruce Tip Syrup



Developed by Gayla Pedersen



MATERIALS:

Glass jar
Cheese Cloth
Sugar
Spruce Tips

Step One: Collecting Spruce Tips

- 1) Find a spruce tree with young tips that are just starting to break out of their brown paper covering. Slightly larger tips can still be used if the needles are soft.
- 2) If you suffer from pollen allergies look for trees that do not have red pollen cones
- 3) Collect as many tips as you like. Make sure you don't take too many from one tree, roughly 10%.
- 4) If you cannot find young spruce tips in your area check trees at higher elevations. They can be a couple weeks behind trees at sea level.



Julia Pestrikoff demonstrating how to collect spruce tips, Port Lions, 1990. Kodiak Area Native Association, Alutiiq Museum, AM4:108. Photograph by Priscilla Russell.

Step Two: Prepare Tips

- 1) Go through the tips you have collected and de-paper, remove all the brown bits on the ends.
- 2) Fill a clean dry jar just over halfway with the cleaned tips and fill remainder of the jar with sugar. Put a lid on the jar. Label it with contents and date.

Step Three: Infuse the syrup

- 1) Flip or shake the jar daily. In a day or so you should see your sugar starting to absorb the liquid released by the tips.
- 2) After about two weeks the sugar should be completely liquid. At this point strain your syrup through several layers of cheese cloth.
- 3) Bottle in a clean dry container with an airtight lid.
- 4) Store in the fridge. Discard if color changes or if the syrup smells bad.

**Any extra tips you picked that weren't used for the syrup can be dried on a window screen in a well-ventilated room or outside on a dry day and used for tea. Steep the dried tips in hot water and enjoy!

A Note of Caution: All use of wild plants is done at the user's own risk. The Alutiiq Museum and its partners accept no responsibility for experimentation.