

Sumac Lemonade

Makes 8 cups

Red Staghorn sumac drupes can be used to make a delicious, lemony beverage. Harvest your sumac carefully. Forage on a dry, sunny day, ideally from late July to September, before heavy rainfall washes away the powdery, tart extract on the berries. Make sure to find sumac trees far from the roadway so the tree has not absorbed harmful chemicals from the pavement. Do not use white sumac as it is poisonous.

2-3 cups red sumac berry clusters

8 cups water

Maple syrup to taste

Strip the berries from the sumac and place in a large bowl. Submerge them in the cold water. Mash the berries gently to help release the flavours into the water. Let the mixture steep for 12 to 24 hours in the refrigerator.

Pour the liquid through a fine-mesh sieve lined with cheesecloth or a clean tea towel to remove all the tiny hairs and sediment. Sweeten to taste with maple syrup and serve cold. Add sparkling water if desired.