

Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*

Tips

- Use dry or fresh horehound leaves and flowers in teas
- Fresh leaves can be used in candy recipes
- Sweeteners such as honey, molasses, and sugar as well as lemon are often added to horehound recipes to balance the bitter flavor
- Recipes with horehound are often made with the dual purpose of treating cold, flu, and bronchitis symptoms.
- Dried horehound can also be used in potpourri recipes and dried flower arrangements

Horehound Candy

2 cups horehound leaves, packed
1 ¼ cups water
4 cups dark brown sugar
¼ cup light corn syrup

Wash horehound leaves and put in saucepan. Add water and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes, mashing occasionally with fork. Remove from heat; cover and let cool (needs to stand at least 1/2 hour to infuse).

While infusion is cooling, butter a 9x13 pan.

Drain horehound leaves into measuring cup (I use a coffee filter to strain it). Be sure to squeeze all the liquid from the leaves. Make sure you have at least 1 cup of liquid. Discard leaves.

Pour liquid into a 4 quart saucepan. Add brown sugar and syrup. Bring to a boil and cook to 300 degrees on a candy thermometer (hard crack stage).

Pour into prepared pan and let cool. Just before it sets up, score into squares with a knife to make it easier to break apart. When cool and set, break into pieces and store in airtight container.

Note: The infusion (liquid from the leaves) can be frozen to use later.

Old-Fashioned Horehound Hard Candy

1 cup fresh horehound leaves chopped, or 1/3 cup dried horehound
2 cups water
1 cup honey (can be replaced with sugar)
1 cup sugar (white or light brown)
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Butter for greasing pan
Powdered sugar to toss finished pieces
For best results, you will need a candy thermometer

Add the horehound to water and bring to boil. Remove from heat and steep for 30-60 minutes. Use butter to grease a 9x13-inch pan. (Or use candy molds.) Strain the liquid to collect the infused water. Discard leaves.

Put all ingredients into a large pot and mix. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil until temperature reaches 300°F on a candy thermometer.

Options for Finishing:

- Pour mixture into a pan greased with butter. When it starts to cool score with a knife into 1-inch squares. Break apart when cool.
- Allow pan to cool and break the sheet of candy into pieces.
- As soon as the candy is cool enough to handle, pinch off pieces and roll into candy-sized balls.
- Use candy molds.
- Toss pieces in powdered sugar to prevent sticking. Store in an airtight container.

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Rock n' Rye Whisky

1 (750-milliliter) bottle of rye whiskey
1 (6-inch) string rock candy
1 whole clove
1 teaspoon horehound (dried)
2 orange slices
2 lemon slices
1 dried apricot
1 cinnamon stick

In a large container, add the whiskey, rock candy, clove, and horehound. Allow the mixture to infuse in a cool, dark place for about three days. Add the remaining ingredients and steep for an additional one to two days (or longer), to taste. Once the whiskey has reached the desired flavor, strain out the fruits and spices and then bottle the whiskey. Serve and enjoy.

Tips:

- Using a good rye whiskey is essential, but it doesn't have to be the absolute best. There are many mid-range rye whiskies available that work perfectly.
- The longer the rock candy sits in the whiskey, the more the flavors will meld. It is important to test the infusion periodically until it gets to your desired flavor intensity.
- The finished rock and rye should be bottled under a tight seal. The original whiskey bottle works well, as does a Mason jar or any glass bottle that seals out air.
- Once strained and bottled, rock and rye keeps well for up to two months in the refrigerator.

Recipe Variations:

- Use orange slices instead of lemon or a combination of the two citrus fruits.
- A few pineapple chunks are a good alternative to the apricot.
- Rather than rock candy, many modern rock and rye recipes use honey, simple syrup, or a flavored syrup (syrup from a jar of high-end cherries is popular). Use 2 to 3 tablespoons and stir it into the whiskey.

Lance Mayhew
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Do you have any recipes featuring horehound to share?

Contact educator@herbsociety.org

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