

Homemade Elderflower Cordial

2½kg granulated sugar

2 lemons

20 fresh elderflower heads, stalks trimmed

85g citric acid (available from chemists)

Put the sugar and 1½ litres of water into a large saucepan. Gently heat, without boiling, until the sugar has dissolved. Give it a stir every now and again. Pare the zest from the lemons using a potato peeler, then slice the lemons into rounds. Once the sugar has dissolved, bring the pan of syrup to the boil, then turn off the heat. Fill a washing up bowl with cold water. Give the flowers a gentle swish around to loosen any dirt or bugs. Lift flowers out, gently shake and transfer to the syrup along with the lemons, zest and citric acid, then stir well. Cover the pan and leave to infuse for 24 hrs.

Line a colander with a clean tea towel, then sit it over a large bowl or pan. Ladle in the syrup – let it drip slowly through. Discard the bits left in the towel. Use a funnel and a ladle to fill sterilised bottles. The cordial is ready to drink straight away, diluted with still or sparkling water. It will keep in the fridge for up to 6 weeks and makes about 4 litres.

