

# The Ellicellar Elderberry Wine

by Roy Ellis

(Editor's note: Roy first appeared in these pages with an article on using casein to reduce oxidase in oxidized wines. A member of Capital Amateur Winemakers in Ottawa, he has been making wine for many years and is a frequent award winner. He offers this as an addition to the "chain" on elderberries originated by Gord Barnes in our last issue).

I read with interest the article about Elderberries in the December issue of AWOnews and felt that something was lacking. Elderberries make a delicious wine which was not mentioned in the article. I have two large shrubs of Common Elderberries, *Sambucus Canadensis*, from which I collect between forty and forty-five kilograms (90 to 100 lb) of clean berries each year. From these I keep about half for wine and give the remainder to friends who also make Elderberry wine. The wine can be made in the full range of dry to sweet. I prefer the dry wine myself. To add a little "body" to the wine I generally add one can of red grape concentrate, but this is optional. As the article pointed out, the berries tend to be mildly unpleasant tasting and that is putting it mildly. Consequently, the wine requires lots of sugar, even for a dry wine. I have four different recipes for Elderberry wine, but I am attaching a copy of the one I prefer. Perhaps some of our readers may be interested in trying a batch.

NOTE: This recipe is based on making one gallon of dry wine for each four pounds of fresh elderberries, or one pound of dried berries.

## Ingredients:

This recipe is for a one-gallon (4.5 litres) batch.

- 4 lb (1.82 Kg) fresh elderberries.
- 3.5 lb (1.54 Kg) white sugar
- Burgundy wine yeast (I use Lalvin 71B-1122)
- Yeast nutrient: I use Lalvin "Fermaid" at a rate of one gram per gallon.
- One gallon of boiling water
- Sufficient K2S2O5 to yield 30 ppm Free SO<sub>2</sub>

Special Note: if the volume to be made is about ten to fifteen gallons, I add one can of red wine concentrate to the must to give it more "body".

## Procedure:

As stated above, the figures shown are for a single one-gallon lot. It is unlikely that one would make a single gallon, therefore, multiply all of the above figures by the number of gallons to be made.

1. A day, or two, before starting the wine, make a yeast starter and allow it to sit in a warm place.
2. When making the wine, crush as many berries as seems practical and put in the remainder as whole berries. Dissolve the sugar into some water and add to the berries, bringing the volume up to the quantity required. When this mix comes to room temperature, add the balance of the ingredients and stir vigorously. Then add the yeast culture. Cover with a plastic sheet and allow it to sit, stirring frequently for three days.

A VERY SPECIAL NOTE: When the must starts to ferment, a thick mucilaginous sludge may develop on the surface of the must. Using a paper towel, skim off as much of it as you can, then transfer the must to another primary fermenter through a cheese cloth strainer. AT NO TIME should you use warm, or hot water to get rid of the scum. Use only cold water. Warm, or hot water will polymerise the scum into a thick gluey substance which is difficult to clean away. Allow the must to finish fermenting in the second tub, then put the wine into a carboy and install an air lock. When the wine has settled, rack off into a clean carboy adding sufficient free SO<sub>2</sub> to maintain 50 ppm then reinstall the air lock. Now follow the normal procedure for cold stabilizing,