

WARNING: People who are deathly allergic to poison ivy, mangoes, cashews, or pistachios should avoid contact with all types of sumac. They are in the same family & might cause an allergic reaction.

Sumac Lemonade

(Two-Minute Stir Method)

You'll need: Bright, dark-red, *super sour-tasting* Smooth, Staghorn, or Winged Sumac fruit heads, a large kitchen strainer, two one-gallon-sized plastic pitchers, a large plastic bowl, a wooden spoon, a straining cloth (see #3), and sugar, sugar syrup, honey, or a diabetic sweetener, if you wish.

1. ~~Dry fruit heads by baking at 250 degrees for 25 minutes.~~ Take a fruit head in each hand. Point them in opposite directions and rub them together, forcing the drupes off. Repeat until you have four cups worth. Put in a large kitchen strainer & shake the strainer from side to side over a wastebasket to remove anything clinging to the drupes (dried-up flower parts, etc.)
2. Dump the drupes into a gallon pitcher. Add three quarts of cold water. Stir with the wooden spoon for two minutes.
3. Place a flour sack dishtowel over the empty pitcher, letting it sag into the pitcher a little bit. Have a helper hold it in place so it can't slip down, as you pour the liquid out of the stirred pitcher. This removes the drupes & sediment. Carefully lift the towel off and dispose of it with the drupes and sediment.
4. Taste to see if sweetening would improve it. My 7th graders and I felt that it would. A diabetic student sweetened hers with a packet of Splenda™. She liked it. The rest of us made a simple sugar syrup by adding three cups of sugar to one quart of water in a pot. A student heated it, stirring until the sugar dissolved completely. I added one cup of the syrup to the three quarts of sumac lemonade. We agreed that it was just right. (2/3 c of sugar is an alternative)

Makes three quarts

Recipe from Mike Krebill, 150 Oakcliff Lane, Keokuk, Iowa 52632. E-mail: MikeKrebill@aol.com. Tested and refined by 7th grade science students. *For 20 years, my classes experimented with making sumac lemonade. This technique, along with using only super-sour tasting clusters, consistently produces good looking and good tasting sumac lemonade.*

Smooth Sumac



Red-coated drupes (seed cover & seed) are in upright, Christmas tree-shaped clusters four to 10 inches tall.

Poison Sumac



Yellowish-white drupes hang down in open clusters up to 10 inches long.