

**For adults and children in the garden or outdoor space - supervision essential**

## Elderflower treats

Natural England wants to give a million children the chance to discover the outdoors. The natural world is a fascinating place to explore and our natural habitats together with the creatures and plants that live there can provide endless sources of fun. From your own back yard to the wilds of our national nature reserves, now is the time to make the most of the outdoors and go wild!

Together with Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield ([www.goingwild.net](http://www.goingwild.net)), authors of Nature's Playground, Go Wild and Make it Wild ([www.franceslincoln.com](http://www.franceslincoln.com)), we've produced these fantastic activity sheets to give you plenty of ideas of what you can get up to, what are you waiting for?



Elder may grow in a corner of the garden unappreciated for much of the year, but it comes into its own in early summer! Children love to gather food for free; so let them collect its frothy flowers from the garden or a local hedgerow. Pick the freshest flower heads that have just burst open and place them gently into a bag or basket. Use them immediately to make delicious elderflower cordial, to add to homemade jellies and jams, or to dip in a light batter and fry into tasty fritters. They can also be used to make a delicious scented cordial or sorbet.

### Ingredients

- 25–30 large elderflower heads
- 1.8kg/4lb-granulated sugar
- 1l/13/4 pints water
- 2 lemons
- 75g/21/2oz citric acid (available from good pharmacists)





### A recipe for elderflower cordial

- Mix the sugar and water in a large saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Transfer the contents of the saucepan to a large bowl.
- Grate the zest of two lemons into the bowl. Then slice the lemons and add to the mixture, along with the citric acid.
- Cut most of the stalks off the flowers. Add the flowers to the bowl.
- Cover and leave to infuse for 24 hours.
- Strain the mixture through muslin, squeezing out as much juice as possible.
- Decant the liquid into clean bottles.
- Elderflower cordial can be stored in the fridge for a couple of weeks, or frozen until required.

### Using elderflower cordial

#### A refreshing drink

Dilute the cordial with still or sparkling water to make a delicious summer drink.

#### With soft fruit

Undiluted cordial adds both sweetness and a subtle fragrance if mixed with fresh strawberries or raspberries.

#### A sorbet

Add about 800ml/1 1/2 pints of water to each 200ml/ 1/3 pint of cordial and place in a plastic container. Freeze for two to three hours, and mix well. Repeat this process about three or four times to break down the ice crystals and produce a beautifully smooth, opaque sorbet, a delicious accompaniment to soft fruit and a refreshing favourite with children on a hot summer's day.

**Fruit and elderflower sauce** Simmer fruit such as strawberries, plums or apricots in elderflower cordial and water until the fruit is cooked. Puree and use the sauce with vanilla ice cream.

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### Safety tips

- Make sure you know exactly what you are collecting.
- Do not collect from roadside bushes, which may be polluted with exhaust fumes.