

HOGGETOWNE ALE WORKS GUIDE TO MAKING FRUIT WINES

Making fruit wines from seasonal, local fruit is fun and easy. Follow these steps, keep everything sanitary and in 6 weeks you can be enjoying the wine you made from scratch!

- 1) Freeze your fruit if possible. This bursts the cell walls and allows the juice to be more easily extracted when you thaw it to make the wine. It also preserves your fruit until you're ready to begin the process.
- 2) Crush your thawed fruit and mix it with sugar (dextrose is best) and clean water (not tap water) inside a 6.5 gallon fermentation bucket lined with a 24x36 bag. It is hard to know exactly how much sugar to use but a good rule of thumb is most common fruits will provide 6-8% potential alcohol. Each pound of sugar will add approximately 1%.
- 3) Sanitize your must (the concoction you have just created) by crushing 6 Campden tablets (Potassium Metabisulfite) and stirring them into it. This kills the wild yeast which was living all over the outside of the fruit. You may also add pectic enzyme at this point to assist breaking down the fruit pectins to fight haze. Cover loosely and wait 36 hours.
- 4) Wait 36 hours! You are pitching (open packet, sprinkle) your chosen yeast into the must and if you don't let the Campden tablets dissipate, it will kill the new yeast. Go ahead, pitch the yeast now. Prepare yeast nutrient by dissolving it in a small amount of boiling water and add it to the must. Cover the bucket tightly and affix the airlock half-filled with Star-San no-rinse sanitizer solution to prevent infections.
- 5) After 7 days, remove the bag containing the fruit pulp, seeds, skins, etc. with sanitized hands and give it a gentle squeeze to get the residual wine out. Cover the bucket tightly again and check the airlock. Discard the pulp and wash the bag for reuse.
- 6) After 7 more days your primary fermentation (active phase) is complete. Transfer your wine from the primary (bucket) to a sanitized secondary (5 gallon carboy) with a sanitized racking cane or auto-siphon, avoiding splashing the wine which introduces oxygen and will stale it quickly. Star-San works best for all these functions (NEVER use bleach!). Affix the stopper and half-filled airlock.
- 7) After 21 days you can stabilize your wine and de-gas it. Crush up 6 more Campden tablets, dissolve them in warm water and pour into the wine. You may skip this addition if you wish to minimize sulfites in your wine but remember it will result in a shorter shelf life. Use "The Whip" or something similar to whip the CO₂ out of solution so your wine will neither be "fizzy" nor hazy.
- 8) After 7 more days it's bottling time! Sanitize and use the same siphon equipment as before with a bottle wand attached to fill your sanitized bottles. You will need to prepare about 30 bottles for this step. No matter which corks you decide to use, soak them in sanitizer prior to insertion.
- 9) That's it! You're done. You've made wine. Congratulations!

This is the simplest scenario of winemaking and depending on certain conditions you may wish to use tannins or acid blend, extra fining agents or flavorings. You may forego Campden tablets, introduce more sugar and use Champagne bottles for a sparkling wine. The possibilities are endless. Feel free to experiment and have fun.