

## Preserve your harvests

### Basic Syrup:

For every 340g of fruit, you will need 255g of sugar and 80ml of water. You simply prepare the fruit in whichever way is appropriate for the fruit and add it to a saucepan with the sugar and water. Bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer and continue until you achieve a syrupy consistency (probably 10-15 minutes) Strain and bottle in sterilised bottles.

### Basic cordial

For each kg of fruit, you will need 1 litre of water. Add the fruit and the water to a saucepan, bring to the boil then reduce to a simmer until your chosen fruit is cooked very well. Next strain through a sieve lined with a muslin cloth and measure how much liquid you have collected. For every 100 ml of liquid, you will need 100 grams of sugar. Add the liquid and calculated sugar to a clean saucepan and gently warm to dissolve the sugar, slowly increasing the heat to bring it to a boil. Once a boil is achieved drop the heat to reach a simmer and keep it at this point for two minutes. The liquid should look thicker and glossy. You are now ready to bottle your cordial in sterilised bottles.

### Basic Jam

For 900 grams of fruit, you will need 900 grams of granulated sugar, a knob of butter and for raspberries – no water, for strawberries – 3 tablespoons of lemon juice, for blackberries – 50ml of water and one and a half tablespoons of lemon juice, and for stoned fruit – 150ml water. To start with, add just the fruit and water/water and lemon juice/just the fruit to a saucepan and simmer until the fruit is soft. Then drop the temperature and tip in the sugar, stirring until its dissolved. Only then raise the temperature to produce a rolling boil. Do not stir. Boil raspberries for five minutes, strawberries for 20, blackberries for 10, and stoned fruit for 12. Reach the 105 degree setting point then take off the heat. Skim off any scum and add the knob of butter. Allow the jam to sit for ten minutes then decant carefully into warm, sterilised jars.

You can preserve the therapeutic constituents of medicinal plants in mediums such as carrier oils, honey, glycerine, vinegar and alcohol. For home use, in each case, the process is much the same. Simply loosely fill a jar with your chopped plant matter having carefully garbled it (picking off any brown or dead matter) and then pour over your chosen preservative medium, making sure it covers the plant material completely. Stir to ensure there are no air bubbles that allow bacteria to breed. Seal the jar, label and let the jar sit somewhere dark, usually for 4-6 weeks after which time you can strain it off through a muslin cloth and keep your herbal oil, honey, glycerine, vinegar or alcoholic tincture in a sterilised bottle or jar.

