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# Barefoot Farmer

by Jeff Poppen

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We made homemade wine this summer. Apples were abundant, and we picked up dozens of bushels to give away and make juice from. Many folks gave us apples from trees I grafted years ago. I'll be grafting again in March so get me twips by then if you want another tree. Thanks for sharing the harvest.

I dissolved from pounds of sugar in a gallon of water and added it to four gallons of cider. It is in a 5 gallon glass carboy with a narrow top. I added a packet of Montrachet wine yeast and put on an airlock. This is a curved plastic tube with water in it that allows carbon dioxide to escape but won't let oxygen back in.

Keeping oxygen away is very important in wine making. Yeast eats sugar and excretes alcohol and carbon dioxide. If oxygen gets in, the wine goes in the wrong direction and doesn't taste good. Cleanliness is also necessary, wine easily picks up other flavors. Finally, always keep it in the dark; light hurts the quality of wine.

## Homemade Wine

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

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Mark gave me five gallons of concord grape, which I then took off of the stem. Seven pounds of sugar were dissolved in three gallons of water and poured into a five gallon crock which was 2/3 full of grapes. Wine yeast was sprinkled on top and the crock was covered with plastic held on with elastic.

I stirred it daily for four days. During this primary fermentation so much carbon dioxide is released you don't have to worry about oxygen getting in. the plastic (I use a trash bag) will balloon upward.

After the fourth day I gently scoop out the grapes with a strainer, but do not squash them. The wine is poured into a five gallon carboy with an airlock. After a few months sediment forms on the bottom. We use clear plastic tubing, about 6 feet long, to siphon all the wine into another carboy, leaving the sediment behind. This is called racking the wine.

When it stays clear and leaves no more sediment it is time to bottle. We wash about two dozen bottles for each five gallon carboy of wine. Then we put the wine on the table and siphon it into bottles. The corks are soaked in water and we have a corker to press them in. We leave about an inch of air space.

If the wine is sweet, it can continue to ferment and your bottle will have sparkling wine. This is naturally carbonated. We keep our wines pretty dry, that's the kind of wine I like.

We made three other kinds of wine this year, but they will be used like medicine. Persimmon, Passionfruit and Pokeberry are wild Tennessee fruits. I couldn't resist, with their abundance this year, in bottling some. Pokeberry wine is helpful with arthritis. My understanding is the seeds are poisonous, but there juice is not. We strain out the seeds.

Good wine is made from good fruit and good wine yeast. Don't use the fruit if you wouldn't eat it. Fruit quickly sours after it is ripe, but we don't want to make vinegar. Keep everything clean, rinse out your bottle after you finish it, and keep the light and air out. Homemade wine is easy to make, folks like us have been doing it for thousands of years.

## **About Barefoot Farmer**

**The Barefoot Farmer (Jeff Poppen) uses his farm (Long Hungry Creek Farm) as an example in demonstrating good farming principles. The landscape and atmosphere of the 21st century is leaning away from a small farm economy, bucolic scenery, sustainable agriculture and homegrown meals. The health of ourselves and our environment can only be enhanced by a reliance on local small farms for our needs. To learn more about these principle join Jeff Poppen with his weekly column - Barefoot Farmer.**

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