

Baking with Persimmons and Wild Berries

Here are some delicious recipes using edible fruits from Missouri Native Trees. Read more about the main ingredients following each recipe.



American Persimmon
All photos by Randy Tindall

Persimmon Cake with Rice Flour

Ingredients

Number of Servings: 12
3/4 cup raisins
Enough milk to cover raisins
2 cups rice flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups pure cane sugar unbleached
3/4 cup melted butter (can substitute with Greek style yogurt)
3 eggs
1 1/4 cups persimmon pulp
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 1/2 cups non-hybrid Missouri pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. In small saucepan over medium heat, bring raisins and milk to a boil. Remove from heat and let cool.
3. In a medium bowl, mix melted butter, persimmon pulp, eggs, and vanilla. Set aside.
4. In a large bowl, mix dry ingredients. Add persimmon blend and gently stir. Fold in raisins with milk and the pecans.
5. Pour batter into a greased 10 inch diameter cake pan. Bake for 40 minutes or until a knife inserted into the cake out comes clean.
6. Remove from the oven. Let cool and flip over onto a plate. Cake can be frozen for a few months.
7. Top with Cream Cheese icing (above).



Cream Cheese Icing

Ingredients

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon fresh Meyer lemon juice
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons powdered sugar

Mix all ingredients together and spread it onto the Persimmon Cake. Prepare one or two hours before serving.

American Persimmon

(Diospiros virginiana)

Medium sized tree, from 30 to 60 feet tall. Open crown and branched in deep soil conditions. Adapted to dry and low nutrient soils. It has pretty white flowers that look like waxy bells and are visited by native bees and other pollinators. Trees are *dioecious* (male and female flowers in different trees).

Persimmon can be easily reproduced from seed or cuttings. Once established, the taproot is long which makes it difficult to transplant. It is a slow- growing tree but reaches maturity three to five years after planting. It produces root suckers that can be mowed or pruned.

continued on back page



900 Chestnut Street, Allen Hall
Jefferson City, MO 65101
(573) 681-5543

LUCE GS#08-A-2011
Rev. 8/02/2011



Sweet Potato Cookies

Sweet Potato Cookies with Wild Plum Jam

Number of servings: eight dozen (96) small cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup yogurt, Greek style
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups sweet potato, peeled, boiled and mashed (can substitute with 1 cup persimmon pulp and 1 cup mashed sweet potato)
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup native non-hybrid pecans
- 1/4 teaspoon minced crystallized ginger (optional)
- 1/4 cup wild plum jam (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease cookie sheets with Canola oil.
2. Mix dry ingredients in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix sugar, butter, yogurt, eggs and sweet potato. Add dry ingredients to this mix. Fold in crystallized nuts and ginger.
3. Drop dough by teaspoonfuls, one inch apart, onto cookie sheet. Drop 1/4 teaspoonful of wild plum jam on top of each cookie.
4. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes.

Cookies can be kept frozen in air-tight containers.

Recipe for Wild Plum Jam

- 4 cups of wild plum pulp
- 4 cups of sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks

1. Boil plums in water to loosen skin. Get the pulp using a tomato juicer.
2. Boil wild plum pulp with sugar and cinnamon sticks. Lower the temperature and let it simmer for an hour or so. Stir and check mixture constantly to avoid burning. Jam is ready when it sticks to wooden spoon.

Wild Plum (*Prunus americana*)



Fresh Wild Plums

Shrub or a small tree. It spreads from roots and may form thickets. Suckers can be controlled with fire or mowing. The fragrant flowers are in clusters with five white petals. The leaves are alternate, ovate, with long-pointed tips. The fruit is red to yellow and ball-shaped (1" diameter). It grows in full to partial sunlight on fertile loamy soil to marginal soils. It can be found along wooded areas, fence rows and pastures. It can be propagated from seed or cuttings.

Wild plum provides food and cover for wildlife. It is consumed by quail and many other songbirds and mammals.

It is used to produce superb jellies and other preserves.

The edible fruit matures from July to September. It can be consumed raw or cooked.

Persimmon (*continued from page one*)

Fruit is edible and matures in the fall. A good rule of thumb is to gather persimmons that have fallen to the ground to be sure they are ripe. Immature fruits are not at all pleasant. It can be eaten fresh or used for jams, in baked goodies and for wine.

Dehydrated persimmons are a good source of carbohydrates, dietary fiber, iron, calcium, vitamin A and protein. To dehydrate persimmons, cut them in half and dry them in a dehydrator overnight at 130-140°F.