

How to make sugar from your preppers retreat garden Stevia

By Amy S.



A natural, calorie-free sweetener approximately 200 to 300 times as sweet as sugar? Sounds too good to be true, but it's not — it's stevia. This ultra-sweet plant originated in South America, but it's been used in many countries for hundreds of years as a natural sweetener. Using stevia in place of sugar can cut calories and may keep your blood glucose level more stable, according to University of Utah Health Care. Whether you're diabetic or just looking for a natural alternative to white sugar, saccharin or aspartame, stevia is a good choice.

Use fresh stevia leaves as a sweetener in beverages, such as tea and lemonade, or in sauces. A few fresh stevia and mint leaves make a refreshing herbal tea when steeped in a cup of boiling water. Add fresh stevia leaves to beverages or foods as a sweet, edible garnish. Although the fresh leaves are less sweet than dried leaves, they're still much sweeter than sugar. Taste-test your beverage before serving to ensure you don't over-sweeten your drink.

Two sweeteners that I use regularly

1. Stevia
2. Dates.

I adore dates in meals, particularly in raw desserts. Date paste is even better if you make it in bulk and freeze it! Here's how you can make it yourself at home:

Date Paste

- 1:1 ratio of dates to water
- I generally do 1 cup of fresh medjool dates soaking in 1 cup of hot water

- 1tsp of cinnamon, a natural preservative or lemon, depending on your preference

Instructions

1. Blend the dates, hot water and cinnamon until smooth and even.
2. Store in a glass jar for up to a fortnight or so and make sure you label the date!

I have found that this is delicious spread over fresh fruit or added to coconut cream as a sweet treat.

Stevia extract can be purchased at your local health food store or online, or you can make it yourself.

Make Your Own Stevia Extract

- Stevia leaves
- Vodka

Instructions

1. Tear the leaves from the stem and break the leaves up as you place them into a glass jar.
2. Pour in enough vodka to cover all the leaves, and seal and place in a cool spot. I like the cupboard, and I leave to soak for 24-36 hours. (Note: If you're a herbalist or have a friend who is a herbalist, you can get the higher quality alcohol normally used for extractions and tinctures.)
3. Once done, strain and pour the extract into a pot and simmer for 20-30 minutes on a low heat. Do not boil as this will affect the glycosides.
4. Store in glass jar in fridge for 3 months.

Note: I use very small amounts of this extract in my smoothies and teas, experiment to find what works for you and your palette.

These both make unique gifts, so if you know of someone who is eliminating artificial and refined sugars from their diet, why not give them a personalized gift or a dessert made with natural sugars? You can find dark glass tincture bottles at most health food stores these days if you want to gift a bottle of home-made stevia.

Original at <http://www.prepperfortress.com/how-to-make-sugar-from-your-preppers-retreat-garden-stevia/#more-8040>