

A Pot of Rose Hip Tea

Winter is knocking at the door and the cold and flu season is right behind him. I do my best to keep the latter two outside with old man winter. They are not the type of guest I want in my home. There are things one can do to help stay well this time of year. Keeping your immune system in tip top shape is one.

As a child I loved exploring the hundred acre woods around my grandparents estate. In the early summer the air was filled with the fragrance of wild roses. They grew everywhere and were found in every shade of light pink to a vibrant fuschia. The yellow centers reminded me of smiley faces. I would always pick a bouquet for my great grandmother. She spoke very little English and I did not quite understand her when she spoke Finnish. She, however, seemed pleased every time I brought the roses to her.

In the late fall I recall picking the red pods on the roses that were no longer blooming. I would chew on them. One time my great grandmother caught me in the act of chewing rose hips and promptly handed me a pail. I knew that whenever I was given a pail I was to pick something. She said in Finnish the same thing she always said when I would bring her roses. I figured that she wanted me to gather the rose hips and I was right.

She wanted the rose hips for tea. She kept a tea kettle of water simmering on the wood stove. The rose hips were put in the kettle and allowed to steep all night. Every morning we were treated to a cup of rose hip tea sweetened with a bit of honey. I would sip the tea with my elders and feel pretty special because I was the one who gathered the rose hips.

Thinking back on my childhood I had very few, if any, colds in the winter. Rose hips are a good source of vitamin C which is good for the immune system. I make the rose hip tea today much as it was made in those days. I make it in a crockpot. At night I fill the pot with water, add a few handfuls of rose hips, turn the pot on high and leave it alone until morning. A cup of rose hip tea and a bit of honey in the morning or anytime is a refreshing change of pace from the ordinary, and also good for you.

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