

Evergreen



In the freezing winter, when little freshness grows outside, some plants that can be summed up in one word offer a wonderful option: evergreens.

Even our ancestors valued the evergreen plants when the dark season came, they were a symbol of eternity and return. So do evergreen wreaths at the winter solstice.

However, the evergreens were also important for survival and are being rediscovered by those who love wild herbs and plants. After a winter walk in the freezing cold, tea made from pine or spruce needles is a particularly nice thing.

Fir Tea



What could be nicer than snuggling up inside with a mug of tea while it's cold and miserable outside? You can also have fresh tea in the middle of winter: namely from evergreen plants such as firs. Fir green produces a wonderfully aromatic and, above all, healthy tea.

Whether noble fir or other fir species - they are popular with connoisseurs. The pine needles contain resin, which remains liquid even at sub-zero temperatures. This resin helps the fir tree not to freeze while keeping its needles (actually leaves) even in frost. Even if the fir is injured, the resin serves to close the "wound".

The resin can be collected and used further - raw or cooked. It contains vitamin C. So do the pine needles: up to four times more vitamin C than oranges!

You can use fir needles as a tea: simply pour boiling water over it and let it steep for 10 to 15 minutes. One teaspoon of crushed needles per 250ml.

Fir tea is said to be effective against sore throats, nasal congestion, headaches and to help you fall asleep. You can use fir needles all year round, preferably freshly collected from the tips of the branches.

Please avoid during pregnancy (this applies to all conifer preparations).

Spruce

Basically the same as for the fir also applies to the spruce. Always up for a wonderful tea, with antimicrobial and immune-boosting properties. If you don't feel like tea anymore, you can go to spruce beer, wine, etc. pass over There are even beer producers in North America who use spruce as a flavor. You can spice up cold tea with lemon juice, for example.

But you can also make ointments from spruce! Namely from the resin. Simply collect and mix with olive oil to create an antibacterial and wonderfully scented ointment. For a massage oil, simply cover freshly crushed spruce needles with the desired oil and leave for a week or two.



douglas fir

It is best to collect the young shoots in April or early summer. Collect them well distributed, not all from a single main branch. But of course you can also collect and use the needles all year round. You can also store and use dried needles (directly on the branch) for longer.

You can collect the resin of the Douglas fir like other conifers. Best stored in a glass jar.

Tip: to remove resin from your hands, it is best to use oil or alcohol, such as olive oil.

Douglas fir in the kitchen

Especially in spring you can spice up your dishes with fresh evergreens. The fresh shoots are tender and aromatic. It is best to collect when the brown bud coverings fall off.

You can also cover fresh shoots in a glass with water and then leave them in the sun for several hours, or leave them to stand overnight. This is how you get a finely aromatic, really raw and delicious tea. When cold, you can add other ingredients for a drink, such as citrus juice, strawberries, cucumber or other fruits - just as you like.

The tender sprouts are a good addition to pesto, savory pastries or sauces. You can make an oil or vinegar extract and even use Douglas fir in ice cream.

The older the needles get, the more tannins develop, they become less aromatic and tougher.

You can also use the Douglas fir for colds and to strengthen the immune system. It is suitable for healthy skin and has astringent properties. You can even use the dried needles as a bath or as body oil.

Needle-Oil

Drizzle olive oil or jojoba oil over semi-dried, crushed (e.g. even crushed in blender) needles. The oil should be one to two finger widths or at least one cm above the needles. Leave in a glass jar in a warm, dark place for two weeks. Then strain and store in a glass jar in a dark place (it will keep for about a year as a rule of thumb, usually longer).

Douglas Fir Lip balm

- 125 ml douglas fir oil (as described above)
- 20 g chopped wax (Candellila-Wax for example)
- 10 drops essential oil



Gently heat the oil and wax in a water bath until the wax has melted. Place in a glass jar and add the essential oil (when slightly cooled), then pour into lip balm molds or jar.

Additionally, you can add a teaspoon of rosehip seed oil or vitamin E, as well as a little shea butter.

The Douglas fir (*pseudotsuga menziesii*) is the second largest conifer in the world, it can live for over 1000 years.

Juniper



Juniper is known for its berries, which have a permanent place in the kitchen, but also in folk medicine. For example, juniper berries are used in sauerkraut. The bush should also be able to keep witches away if planted near the front door. ;) The witch should only be able to enter after counting all the pins.

You can also use the juniper fruits to make tea. It has a digestive effect with a fruity, albeit bitter, taste. Thanks to the essential oils, it also has an antiseptic and anti-inflammatory effect. Juniper essential oil is particularly popular, even for internal use.

If you are pregnant or have health problems, especially kidney problems, you should consult a doctor before using juniper berries.

We have the common juniper and the Sade tree.

Nutritious juniper berries

Juniper berries are high in antioxidants, good for cell function. They help ward off free radical damage. Essential oil, vitamin C and flavonoids are other ingredients. Juniper tea is drunk after meals to prevent indigestion. It is also a diuretic, so it has a draining effect and has a positive effect on the kidneys and bladder.

Juniper berries are a superfood, commonly used as a spice - the only spice that comes from a conifer. Strictly speaking, they are not berries, but female cones that contain seeds.

Incidentally, the Greeks already used juniper berries as medicine and as a stimulant for athletes, the Romans as a pepper substitute.



Benefits of Juniper Berries

1. antioxidant

Thanks to the bioflavonoids, juniper berries are antioxidants. With more than 87 antioxidant ingredients. Last but not least, they can help reduce high blood pressure.

2. Antibacterial

Juniper berries also have antibacterial and fungicidal properties. The essential oil is therefore even used for cleaning. As well as for skin problems, including staphylococci, but also for eczema and rashes. It is also said to work specifically against candida and to counteract inflammation in the mouth.

An extract from juniper berries is also said to be able to help against parasites that cause leishmaniasis.

Foraging Tips



Use the freshest, i.e. lightest green parts. Wash them and then use a sharp knife (or a blender or mini food processor) to chop them up. If you're drying needles, it's best to use a whole branch, ideally one that broke off in the storm anyway.

Because of the vitamin C, needles should not boil in water, but be poured over with hot water. The crushed needles are used for tea, fresh or dried.

Spruce, fir and pine must of course first be recognized. Do you remember what we learned in school? Pine cones stand on the branches while spruce cones hang from the tree. The cones lying on the ground are spruce cones, the fir sheds the cones in scales.



Spruce bark is reddish brown, while fir has silver-grey bark. Fir bark is much smoother than spruce bark. The crown of the fir tree tapers towards the top, while the crown of the spruce appears somewhat more rounded.

Pines have a different shape than firs and have much longer needles that grow in small clusters, the branches with the needles are also higher up. A healthy fir has even branches almost to the ground.



"Spruce stings, fir doesn't!" - Spruce has sharp needles that sting easily when touched. The flat needles of fir feel rounder and tend not to sting.

If you tear off a pine needle, some bark remains at the point of tearing (flags) stick. The pine needle, on the other hand, detaches itself from the branch in a circular manner. Spruces have needles all over the branch. Pine needles, on the other hand, are arranged in rows.

In addition, the needles of the fir tree have two white wax stripes on the underside.

But it doesn't matter if you mix up spruce and fir, the tea is prepared in the same way and tastes similarly aromatic. Eating the needles raw can cause stomach cramps. Just make sure not to mix up with Yew tree (where it grows).