

"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM" - AVOCADO LEAF WINE

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Wine can be made from almost any kind of plants and fruits, such as grape, plum, orange, tamarind, rhubarb, dandelion and even onion. The only basic requirements for wine making are a fermentable substrate, such as sugar, and a flavoring substance which is obtained from the specific plant part and is generally characteristic for that plant. One can provide the sugar from one source and the flavoring from another to make wine from a number of plant parts which in themselves could not provide much sugar for fermentation. Thus one can utilize the leaves of avocado for their distinctive and pleasant organic constituents which provide the character commonly termed "anise," and from which an attractive fermented beverage can be obtained.

The sugar content of the avocado leaf is comparatively low; hence it must be supplemented from outside sources. The major contribution of the leaf is that of the flavoring obtained from the native oils and other basic volatile organic constituents which are extracted in the preparatory processes.

One successful procedure utilized to make avocado leaf wine has been developed by Mr. Peter Kent of Taraunga, New Zealand. Mr. Kent is a nurseryman by trade who has developed a rather extensive collection of subtropical plants, fruiting trees and vines. Among these are several avocados. While the avocado is not a fruit of major economical importance in New Zealand at present, Mr. Kent has demonstrated that the tree will grow well in the eastern coastal area of the North Island. He has introduced several California varieties for testing in this project. His genuine interest in all aspects of horticulture and related fields has induced him to experiment with some unusual uses of the plants and their products. Hence his curiosity has led him to investigate the avocado as a source of wine. The process which he uses is adapted from an old method once used to produce oak-leaf wine.

The general directions for making avocado leaf wine are as follows: Take one gallon of recently dried Mexican-type avocado leaves measured and firmly pressed, but not crushed. Add one gallon of boiling water and allow to steep and cool. Strain off the liquid. Add ½ pound of raisins, 3 pounds of sugar and 3 teaspoons of lemon juice. Allow the mixture to ferment in a ceramic container at room temperature. When fermentation is complete the wine is ready to be bottled. It will improve upon aging.

Only the leaves of the Mexican avocado race are utilized for this purpose because of the anise flavor which they contain. Leaves of the Guatemalan and West Indian varieties are not suitable.

This wine, of moderate alcoholic content, should be of interest to individuals who attempt to provide the unusual for guests and friends. A sample of the wine provided by

Mr. Kent for the author during a recent trip to New Zealand proved to be an attractive beverage with a fine body and a pleasant bouquet.