

Canterbury Faire 2015 - Gruit Ale Recipe

6 kg Pale Barley Malt

30g Heather Twigs (to provide tannin)

60g Yarrow Leaves (the feathery leaves)

1kg Liquid Clover Honey (the nicer the better, but cheap honey will be absolutely fine)

125g Heather Tips (softer green parts of the plant, with the flowers if possible)

30g Yarrow Flowers

56g Sweet Woodruff

1 sachet of *WLP566 Belgian Saison II Yeast*

Heat about 12 ltrs of water in a copper kettle. Crack the barley using a grain mill. Divide the malt between two 9ltr buckets and top up with water at about 65C, cover and leave for 30 to 40 minutes. (Insulate your buckets if possible to maintain temperature)

When the “wort” is tasting decidedly sweet, (dip a finger in and taste it, it should be close to a cup of tea with more than one spoon of sugar in it) strain the out the grains. (For this we used a device we called the “SpargeMaster 1200” a wire basket with a coffee sack in it suspended over a large brass basin.) Pour about another 5 ltrs of hot water through the grains, then return the wort (approx. 11ltrs in all) to the copper kettle.

Add the yarrow leaves and the heather twigs and boil for one hour, then add the honey and boil for another 30 minutes. Take it off the heat and add the rest of the herbs, put a lid on the kettle, then leave to rest for further 30 minutes.

Hold a large clean coffee sack over your fermenting bin and strain the herbs from the wort. Cover and leave to cool to room temperature. Swish with a spoon or whisk to aerate the wort until there is a bit of a froth on the top. Allow to settle then add the yeast according to the instructions on the packet. Once the wort has cooled to room (or in our case outdoor) temperature place an airlock on the fermenter.

With an average day time temperate of around 24 degrees, and an average night time temp of 12 degrees (at a wild guess) this was ready to drink in 4 days, and favourably received, especially by the non-beer drinkers. About 4 ltrs was drunk on the day, another 3 ltrs that evening and the remained, which we bottled was still good after two weeks.