Preserving Muscadines

Muscadine grapes are a true South Carolina treasure. They are native to the South East region of the United States and with prime harvest in September and October they are a great fruit to preserve right now!

Jams, jellies and juice made with Muscadine grapes are fantastic and can be frozen or canned for future use. So, if you are lucky enough to find yourself with an abundance of muscadines consider trying the following research-based recipes to make the most of your grapes!!

Muscadine Jelly

**Canning Method:**

4 cups muscadine juice
3 cups sugar

Yield: 3 or 4 half-pint jars

To Prepare Juice—Select grapes that are just ripe. Wash and crush grapes. Without adding water, boil and simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Press juice from the heated grapes. Pour the cool juice into glass containers and refrigerate. The next day strain the juice through a cloth jelly bag. Do not squeeze the bag.

To Make Jelly—Sterilize canning jars. Heat 4 cups of juice to boiling in a saucepot. Add 3 cups sugar and stir until the sugar dissolves, then boil rapidly over high heat to 8°F above the boiling point of water or until jelly mixture sheets from a spoon. Remove from heat; skim off foam quickly. Pour hot jelly immediately into hot, sterile jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process half-pint and pint jars in a boiling water-bath canner for 5 minutes at 0-1,000 ft. elevation or 10 minutes if your elevation is 1,000 – 6,000 ft.

**Freezer Method:**

Preparation – Choose fully ripe, firm, sweet grapes. Sort, stem and wash fruit. Leave seedless grapes whole. For deseeded grapes, separate pulp, from hulls, saving both. Heat pulp to boiling to separate seed. Mix juice with hulls and boil until the hulls are tender (15 to 20 minutes). Mix softened hulls with deseeded pulp. Add one part sugar to six parts grapes, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Cool and pack, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze.

**Making & Freezing Juice**

For beverages, crush grapes. Add 1-cup of water per gallon of crushed grapes. Simmer for 10 minutes. Strain juice through a jelly bag. To remove tartrate crystals, let stand overnight in refrigerator or other cool place. Pour off clear juice for freezing. Discard sediment. Pour juice into containers, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze. If tartrate crystals form in frozen juice, they may be removed by straining the juice after it thaws.

If you are new to canning we recommend reviewing HGIC 3040, Canning Foods at Home.

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