

Wild Grape Jelly

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

April was walking the dog one day when she noticed some vines hanging along the street. They had dark little fruit hanging from them that looked a lot like grapes, only smaller. It got her curious, so she took a leaf home to check it out. She searched around on the Internet and found some books, and she found out that they were wild grapes.

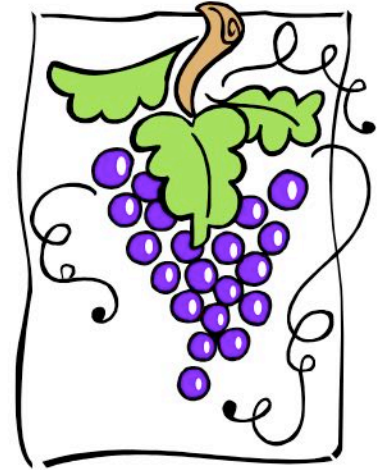
The next day when she was walking the dog, she tried a few of them. Just to make sure, she only had a couple, and then she waited to make sure she didn't get sick. They were very tart, not at all like the grapes you buy at the store. They were almost more like blueberries or blackberries. They had good flavor, though, and she didn't get sick.

April had an idea. She would collect as many as she could, and then make something out of them. It was hard, sweaty work with a bucket tied to her waist. She picked a huge pot full of them and took them home. Then, she rinsed them off and plucked off the stems. She was left with a giant pot full of glistening little grapes.

She decided to start by making juice. She mashed them in the pot with a spoon and a potato masher, warming them on the stove. The juice heated up, killing the germs. The juice bubbled and then cooled. She tried a sip. Wow! That was good, but so tart. She added some sugar to balance it out. That was way better than store-bought juice!

She left some as juice, a small pitcher of it, but it seemed like a waste of fruit. She'd strained out seeds and skins, but there was still a lot left. She got out her mixer, ground up the skins with the juice, and then strained it once more. Now she had a thick sauce, which she added pectin to. Pectin is used to make jams and jellies. This thickened it up enough that it was like blueberry syrup for pancakes, except it was wild grape syrup!

The final leftovers, she strained and pressed one more time. She added even more pectin to thicken it up further. Now she had a few jars of jam. She'd made three different things from free grapes. All it had cost her was time, some sugar, some pectin, and a little electricity!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. How did April find the grapes?
 - A. She spotted them when she was walking the dog.
 - B. Birds were eating them.
 - C. She saw a TV show about them.
 - D. A friend pointed them out.
2. Which of these does April NOT do before gathering the grapes?
 - A. check on the Internet to see what they are
 - B. eat just a couple to see if she gets sick
 - C. research in some books
 - D. ask her neighbor
3. What piece of gathering equipment does April use?
 - A. snips
 - B. scissors
 - C. a bucket
 - D. gloves
4. What does April make from the grapes first?
 - A. juice
 - B. jam
 - C. pudding
 - D. syrup
5. What ingredient helps thicken the sauce and jam?
 - A. sugar
 - B. juice
 - C. pectin
 - D. water

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