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How to Make Spruce Beer You've got to make it from the black spruce. You know, there's three spruce trees • black, red and white. Take it any time at all, as long as it's black • but be sure and get somebody that understands the different colors of the spruce trees. And you tsike your limbs • the nee? dles are still on • and you boil them. You'd have to have a pot • perhaps a 6 quart pot--to boil your spruce in. But keep that pot for nothing else only boil the spruce because there'll be more or less balsalm form around the pot, you see? And every time you use it just wash it, get the balsalm all off. You'd be surprised what balsalm comes out of the spruce limbs. Don't use too much spruce because if you make it too sprucey it's not good. Just enotigh to taste the spruce off it. I'll tell you you'll have to make a couple of batches before you will get the taste that you'd want, I just go by guess. Boil them, and then you strain that water, through an old piece of clean white cotton, say an old pillowcase • something like that as long as it's nice and clean. Cheesecloth is too open and a needle might go through and you wouldn't want to find a needle in your spruce beer. You strain your water that you boil your spruce in into a crock or a plastic bucket. And you put your molassis in • 2 pints of molassis to 8 quarts of water. That will make 8 40-ounce bottles. And you just put a little yeast into it • not very much yeast. No, no, not a whole envelope. You'd make two batches with a baker's envelope of dried yeast, I'jhen you see it coming to the top, the froth coming to the top • then you take it and strain it in your bottles. Have your funnel with a piece of cotton over the top so there'd be no dirt or dust or anything. That's two strains. And that's that. The yeast is all mixed up with the water by this time. You'll see ingredients settle to the bottom and you'll wonder where it comes from because it's been strained • you'll wonder where it comes from. There was a time I used to use the cork corks. You know what a cork is. Well, you'd have to tie those down. Otherwise when your beer'd begin to work it'd pop off. But with the bottles that I get now there's just round corks on them that you just screw on the top. Fill your bottle 3 inches or more from the top. It makes a good drink, especially in the summer when you have it in the fridge and it good and cold. You learn to like it. Mrs. Lillian Williams Mrs. Williams and everyone else we spoke to insisted that you have to use only the black spruce, but apparently the red spruce can be used with equal success. And this is especially good news when you realize that the red and black spruce inter-breed, adding to the difficulties of telling one from the other. Also, brown sugar, honey and maple syrup can be used instead of molassis. The spruce beer Mrs. Williams makes is a mild, delicious and refreshing drink. Years ago the old people would make a more powerful spruce beer. Where Mrs, Williams boils the spruce in a small quantity of water • just to get the taste off it • people used to use a large pot to be sure that all the water used was brewed with the spruce limbs (usually the last 6 inches or so of the limb). The stronger drink depended on adding more molassis and yeast to the concoction. The final step was heat. The tightly corked bottles could be warmed behind the stove or if you had reason to hide it (or really v ranted to drive the heat to you) you could bury it in horse manure. A good



manure bottles can be expected to explode in the manure. The old people used this more powerful brew more as a tonic than a beverage, taking only a little at a time. They claimed that it was good for your health and, in fact, spruce beer is a noted cure for scurvy, A Tradition of Welcome and Comfort Fine Food by the Fire Telegraph House & Motel overlooking the Bras D'Or Lakes at Baddeck 295-9988
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