

What are Rose Hips?

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Q: I have heard that rose hips are a good source of vitamin C, What is a rose hip? And how do you prepare them?

A: A rose hip is the seed pod of a rose flower. All rose hips are edible, but not all rose hips taste good. According to Liz Druitt, The Organic Rose Garden, "The roses with the best tasting hips are: Rosa canina and Rosa rugosa rubra, Hansa, Old Blush, and Dortmund."

Eglantine rose hips are the ones used to make "tea" in Europe, with foliage the fragrance of apples. Rosa villosa (The Apple Rose) has a wonderful flavor and hips that are very easy to clean, ripen in July, are the deepest red, and are as large as the end of one's thumb making them dual purpose for easy harvest and a real conversation piece in the garden.

Rosa canina was used in England during World War II as a source of vitamin C - made into a syrup and used medicinally to prevent scurvy. Rose hips can also be made into jelly, Stacy Ryerson, UCCE Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver of Amador County says don't wait until fall to pick the rose hips; the flesh of the hips will have dried out too much because the developing seeds take up the moisture. Harvest hips as soon as they fully color, but long before the plant defoliates. Cut each hip in half, then using a tiny 1/8 tsp metal measuring spoon, scoop out the seeds and ALL the hairy fibers from the center. Prepare the cleaned flesh according to your recipe.

For more information on growing roses for their hips see The link below :
<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/2010/2-3/rosehips.html>

And for a recipe to make rose hip jelly see this link:
<http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/preserving/fruits/rose-hip-jelly/>