

CHEERS!
BY JEN ROSE SMITH



I'm not a patient gardener. The first warm days get me out in the yard sowing seeds, but by the time the plants are growing, I've been distracted by trips to the river, mountaintop picnics, and sunshine. That makes it even sweeter when the fruits of the garden turn ripe all of a sudden when I'm not paying attention.

And at the height of the season, Vermont's farms and gardens are filled with fruit. Blueberry branches droop under garlands of delectable fruit, and red jewels peek out from underneath strawberry leaves. My own yard is lined with black currant bushes, gooseberries, red currants, and plum trees, and everyone makes a beeline for the raspberries at the farmers' markets.

For Vermont craft bartenders, the season's bounty pairs with locally distilled spirits for "of the moment" summertime drinks. From ripe-raspberry syrups to crushed blueberries, these cocktail recipes are the perfect way to raise a glass to Vermont's sweetest season.

Cocktails for the Sweetest Season

Pourable produce





Vermont Porch Swing

Don Horrigan, Sumptuous Syrups

A lively harvest of fresh produce makes this the perfect drink for warm afternoons.

- 1 oz Smugglers' Notch Distillery gin
- 3 oz Boyden Valley Winery rhubarb wine
- ⅓ oz Yellow Ginger Syrup from Sumptuous Syrups
- ½ oz freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 thin slices of strawberry
- 1 thin slice of peach
- 1 thin slice of cucumber
- 2 sprigs of fresh mint

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker, add ice, and then shake for 30 seconds. Strain into an ice-filled wine glass and top with fresh mint.

Blueberry Mate Mojito

Neil Goldberg, Mad River Distillers

This fresh, lighthearted drink uses blueberries two ways: muddled into the drink and fizzing in a blueberry kombucha from Queen City Kombucha.

- Small handful of fresh blueberries
- 2 oz vanilla rum
- 6 mint leaves
- ½ oz fresh lime juice
- ½ oz simple syrup
- Blueberry Mate Kombucha from Queen City Kombucha
- Sprig of fresh mint

Using a muddler or the back of a spoon, lightly crush the blueberries in a cocktail mixing glass. Pour in the next four ingredients, add ice, then shake for 30 seconds. Strain the contents of the cocktail shaker into a chilled highball glass, and then top with kombucha. Garnish with a sprig of mint.

DIY Drinks:

4 Ways to Use Fresh Fruit in Cocktails

MUDDLE IT. Lightly crush the fruit in the cocktail shaker before adding other ingredients.

ADD IT TO SYRUP. Almost any fruit lends its flavor to a basic simple syrup recipe; see Sam Nelis's fresh raspberry syrup. And it's a great way to preserve an abundant crop. If you'd rather not make it yourself, Vermont-made Sumptuous Syrups are sold at liquor stores around the state.

BLEND IT. Many classic cocktail recipes, from margaritas to daiquiris, benefit from a whirl in the blender with soft fruits such as strawberries, peaches, and raspberries.

MAKE A CORDIAL. Cover fruit with high-proof vodka, let it sit for six months, then add simple syrup to taste—it's an instant cocktail for patient drinkers. This works especially well with fruits that have a good backbone of acid or tannins, such as black currants, plums, or sour cherries.



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Clover Club

Sam Nelis, Waterworks

This drink has a fresh raspberry flavor and a long history; it was created in Philadelphia's Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in the early 1800s.

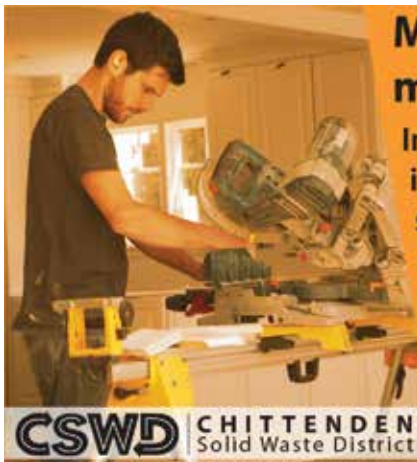
- 1½ oz local gin (try an unaged version like one from Barr Hill or Green Mountain Organics)
- ½ oz dry Vermont vermouth (Sam recommends Dolin Dry)
- ¾ oz freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¾ oz house-made raspberry syrup (recipe follows)
- 1 egg white
- 3 whole fresh raspberries

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker, and "dry shake" the mixture without ice. This ensures that the egg white is properly frothed. Add a scoop of ice, then give the mixture a second hard shake, strain into a cocktail glass, and garnish with skewered raspberries.

Raspberry Syrup

- 1 lb fresh local raspberries
- 2 cups granulated sugar

Gently mash berries in a container, being careful not to break the seeds. Cover berries with sugar and let sit at room temperature for 4 to 6 hours. Add 1½ cups warm simple syrup, stir until the sugar is dissolved, and then strain through a fine-mesh sieve.



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