

Ground Ivy Crème Pâtissier with Iced Bilberry Granita



This recipe serves 4 but you can scale it up or down as required.

Although it's a member of the mint family, I've always thought of Ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) as being savoury rather than sweet. Unlike other members of the mint family, ground ivy has a definite protein/meaty flavour to it and I've always used it in stocks and stews to give a richer flavour.

Anyway, as a member of the mint family I thought it's about time I gave it a chance as a sweet ingredient. The bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) iced granita was to give a more fruity note to cut through the richness of the cream.

Please note, there are some cooking techniques here which sound a little scary (cat's tongue biscuit, creme pâtissier, and granita), but I'm no chef and I'd never done any of them before, and it turned out really well. The presentation needs work, but like I said, not a chef!

Also, you can make this in parts and put it all together when you're ready. I recommend the order I've given below:

Wild fennel sugar ingredients:

- A few wild fennel leaves
- A small pot of caster sugar, or finely ground birch sap sugar

Wild fennel sugar method:

1. Chop up a small handful of wild fennel leaves and put them in a pot with some sugar.
2. Give the pot a good shake and put it away for an hour or two.

Note: It'll be ready in an hour or two, but it'll keep for ages and you can use it for lots of things. If you want it to keep for longer, just sieve out the fennel leaves; the sugar will keep the flavour.



Bilberry iced granita ingredients:

- 200g wild bilberries
- 200g apple juice
- 50g sugar
- 50g water
- 1/4 sheet of gelatin

Bilberry iced granita method:

1. Put the 1/4 gelatin sheet in a bowl of water to soften.
2. Blend the rest of the ingredients and put them through a sieve.
3. Put 50g of the bilberry liquid in a pan and warm gently.
4. Add the gelatin and mix well.
5. Pour the liquid onto a baking sheet and freeze.
6. When frozen, scratch it up with a fork to a crumb-like texture and put it back in the freezer until you need it.



Cat's tongue biscuit ring ingredients:

- 100g egg white
- 100g caster sugar
- 100g flour
- 100g melted butter

Cat's tongue biscuit ring method:

1. Mix together all the ingredients and put it in the fridge for 1 hour.
2. Spread the dough thinly with a spatula on a non-stick sheet.
3. Bake the biscuit in the oven at 170°C for 10 minutes.
4. Remove the sheet from the oven and immediately cut into 2.5cm wide strips. Roll each strip one by one immediately in a muffin ring until cold and firm.
5. Remove the pastry rings and keep in an airtight container until you're ready to serve.

Ground ivy creme ingredients:

- 15g fresh ground ivy leaves and stems, roughly chopped
- 200ml milk
- 200ml cream
- ½ vanilla pod
- 60g sugar
- 120g egg yolk
- 1 gelatin sheet



Ground ivy creme method:

1. Gently heat the milk and cream in a pan with the vanilla pod, ground ivy and sugar.
2. Remove from heat and leave it to cool and infuse for 20 minutes then strain.
3. Put the gelatin sheet in a bowl of water to soften.
4. Warm the infusion again and add the softened gelatin sheet and the egg yolk and stir it well.
5. Put the liquid in a bowl, cover it with cling film and steam it 1 hour. I put the bowl on top of an upturned bowl in a pan of not-quite-boiling water - make sure the water doesn't touch the bowl of cream.
6. Remove from the steamer and put it in the fridge until you're ready to serve.

Found Food

To serve:

- A few edible wild leaves, such as ground ivy, sorrel, fennel, etc.
1. Sprinkle fennel sugar on the plate.
 2. Place the cat's tongue ring in the centre, and fill to 3/4 with the ground ivy creme.
 3. Top the creme with the bilberry iced granita.
 4. Decorate with edible leaves/flowers and serve immediately.

