



While roses have been adored for their beauty for thousands of years, they are more than a pretty face and scent. They offer us powerful medicine for decreasing both emotional and physical pain, for healing wounds, and for decreasing systemic inflammation such as arthritis.

### **Scent is a powerful way to alter your mood**

Try taking a deep breath from the heart of a rose flower. Herbalists commonly use roses to mend a broken heart and to support someone going through grief, sadness and depression.

### **Tips for Harvesting Wild Roses**

Gather the best petals you can find, making sure to harvest in an area that is free from pesticides and herbicides. Next, make sure to harvest from an area where the roses are abundant so you can leave plenty of roses for the bees and other insects.

Before you harvest, smell the roses to make sure they are fragrant, they have more scent when picked in the earlier part of the day rather than the evening.

To harvest the petals, first tap the flower gently to help any insects in the flower find their exit. Then cup your fingers behind the petals and gently tug on them. If they don't immediately let go, move on to a different flower.

Once you have enough petals for the honey mixture, take them home and lay them out in a tray outside to further help any small critters find their way out.

You can use domesticated roses, if there are no wild roses in your area, however you want to make sure they haven't been sprayed and that they have a strong scent. Heritage varieties adapted to your region require little effort to grow. If they don't have a scent, then find different roses. Never use roses from florist shops since those roses have been sprayed with all sorts of chemicals.

### **Rose Petal Honey**

This is a simple treat to make that tastes incredibly luxurious. Try making it in the spring, and then you can drizzle it on pancakes, French toast, ice cream, and granola.

*What you'll need...*

- a small jar
- enough rose petals to fill the jar gently
- raw honey to fill the jar (try local honey at the farmer's market)

*Instructions...*

Once your rose petals have been cleared of any insects, place them into your jar. Put in enough roses that you gently fill the jar. (Unless they are dusty there is no need to wash the rose petals. In fact your honey will be stronger in flavor if you don't rinse them.)

Next fill the jar with honey. Raw, local honey that hasn't been processed may be hard or crystallized. If so, gently warm the honey by setting it in hot water to make sure it has a syrup-like consistency. Being slightly warmed and more fluid helps it to better infuse the petals. (If you keep the temperature of the honey below 95 degrees F., you will still maintain the characteristics of the raw honey.)

Add the honey in two steps. First, fill the rose petal jar with honey and stir it well to release air bubbles. Then, add more honey to fill the jar again.

It's best to wait at least three days before you eat the honey. The honey will pull out the moisture from the roses, infusing it with their perfumed flavor. There is no need to strain the petals, unless you really want to. Keep rose petal honey on the counter. If you live in a warmer climate you may want to keep it in the fridge.

This honey will keep for a long time (if you don't eat it too quickly!).

Remember not to give honey to kids under one year of age.