



annie ashbolt
ASHBOLT FARM

Annie Ashbolt, a familiar sight at her distinctive stall at the weekly Salamanca Market in Hobart, thinks she inherited her entrepreneurial spirit from her father. “My father was a professional fisherman in Hobart, but he was an amazingly talented person who could turn his hand to anything.” She grew up in Hobart but always wanted to marry a farmer, realising that ambition when she joined Bob Ashbolt on his family farm near Plenty in the Derwent Valley. Their decision to plant elder trees allowed them to create their unique Tasmanian products. The elder tree has a long history, associated with witchcraft in medieval times and used for medicinal and culinary purposes for centuries.

elderflower

ANNIE ASHBOLT THINKS island people are innovative and entrepreneurial out of necessity. She is certainly a good example. Tired of accepting the low prices offered by supermarkets and processors, Annie and Bob Ashbolt decided to do some value adding on their 400 hectare Derwent Valley farm. “We wanted to have control in how we operated the farm and we wanted to conserve our soils and not use toxic sprays, so we decided on tree crops,” says Annie.

They planted 10 hectares of elderflower trees and 10 hectares of olives. The olives were an obvious choice but elder trees were a leap of faith. Annie Ashbolt remembers how it happened:

“We had a few elderflowers on the farm, and we found out about the health benefits – they’re good for respiratory complaints, fighting colds and flus and helping build the immune system. We knew they were extensively used in other parts of the world and saw the potential here.”

Their most popular product is the refreshing Elderflower Sparkling, known as the “drink of the angels”. They also make an elderflower concentrate, elderberry wine and an elderberry syrup, as well as a gold medal winning extra virgin olive oil. The Elderflower Sparkling is made using the property’s elderflowers and sweet lemons, apple cider vinegar and fermented with a champagne yeast.

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hot elderflower tea

Ashbolt Elderflower Concentrate
Few thin slices of fresh root ginger
(optional)
Slice of lemon or lime

Pour boiling water over root ginger slices in a plunger pot or cup. Allow to cool a moment or two, and then add a few drops of elderflower concentrate and slice of lemon/lime in the cup.

Annie Ashbolt's favorite way to have elderflower concentrate is as a bedtime tea – great for a relaxing night's sleep or as a detox on a cold winter's morning.

elderflower toddy

The addition of gin or vodka, if desired, will make a delicious hot toddy.

Elderflower syrup can be added to any dessert that requires a delicate, refreshing and slightly sweet, almost lychee, floral flavor. Delicious on ice cream, pancakes or berries or with sparkling water and a slice of lime in a tall tumbler/champagne glass.

Note: Made from the oldest herb cultivated by man, it was traditionally used to build up "poorly children" before winter, and to treat sore throats and ward off colds and flu.

