

[On the Extraction of the Essence of Bark] Dublin Society

Date: 1790/11/03

Contributors

Contributor Role

Other

Contributor Name

Dublin Society

Publication Format

Print

Type

Miscellaneous

Ingredients

bark

water

hemlock

oak

Places

Dublin

Nova Scotia

Londonderry

Ireland

Providence

Rhode Island

America

Source: Nova Scotia Magazine

Institution: Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm | **Reference:** Microfilm Reels 8062, 8063

Description

Instructions for tanning leather with bark, with a discussion of the economic benefits of American bark.
nn.357_58. Microfilm Reel 8063.

Transcription

ON THE EXTRACTION OF THE ESSENCE OF BARK.

[From the Londonderry Journal, of Sept. 19, 1736.]

WE are indebted to our kind correspondent for the communication of the transactions of the Dublin society, at their meeting extraordinary, on Wednesday, the sixth of September, to take into consideration a matter by which the trade and leather manufacture of this country bid fair to be essentially benifited: and as it is still but in embryo, we lay the detail before the public, in hopes that it may excite some ingenious and public-spirited persons to pursue the experiment, and lay open the result, which can be attempted on a small scale sufficiently exact to ascertain the merit of the process.

The society, in their list of premiums, offered the following:

The sum of one hundred pounds will be given to provide bark and proper utensils, and other charges attendant on experiments for discovering an effectual me-

thod of extracting an essence of bark, wherein the tanning qualities thereof shall be concentrated: and for applying said extract to the actual tanning a vat of leather, under the inspection of a committee of the Dublin Society, by such person or persons as the said society shall employ for the purpose. The process, and its result, to be laid before the society on or before the first Thursday in December 1786. To be adjudged the third Thursday in the said month.

The list was sent by an eminent merchant to a correspondent in America: and in consequence, the following letter, &c. was lately delivered to the society.

'State of Rhode Island, Providence June
30, 1786.

'BY the brigantine Happy Return,
Captain Thomas Dring, I have sent the
Dublin society a small sample of an ex-

tract from tanners' bark. I was induced to try the experiment, on my seeing a late publication of the society, wherein they expressed a wish, that some person would make a trial towards reducing that article into a less compass, in order to lessen the expence of transportation.

On examining into the matter, I find, that by boiling one hundred weight of good ground bark, eighteen pounds of essence may be extracted, nigh the consistency of thick tar: and consequently, one ton of bark will produce three hundred and sixty pounds, which may be exported in a forty gallon cask. This reduces the freight nigh seven eightths.

'If, on trial, it should appear that none of the strength is evaporated by the steam in boiling, but that it still retains the whole of the tanning qualities, there can be no doubt but three hundred and sixty pounds will answer the same purpose as a ton of bark. The quantity sent you is contained in a forty two gallon cask, boiled to the state of molasses, and small stone pot to the thickness of tar. The samples should have been larger, had I known sooner of this vessel's going to Dublin. If your tanners think with ours, that it will answer the purpose intended,

your markets may hereafter be supplied with large quantities from hence, and at a more moderate price than at present.

'Our tanners prefer hemlock [the name of a particular species of oak], it being much stronger, and I believe a much greater proportion of essence may be extracted from the hemlock, than from the oak bark.

'The process is easy and very simple. It may be affected by those who cannot work at hard labour, and done back in the country, where bark and fuel are both plenty and cheap.

'The methods I took in the above experiment were as follow:

'After weighing a sufficient quantity of

ground bark, I put it into iron kettles; and after filling them with water, with moderate boiling, extracted the whole of the substance: then strained the liquor into a vessel of brass, and after boiled it away to the substance you have in the samples. A person with proper apparatus, might have saved five hundred weight in less time, and with less expence, than the little quantity cost.

'I am, Sir, &c.

In consequence of the foregoing letter, an extraordinary meeting was immediately summoned, at which several eminent tanners and experienced chymists attended. The extract of the bark was examined; and the master of the corporation of tanners chearfully undertook to pursue such process as was most likely to ascertain its virtue: and several of the trade promised to attend the operation. Should the experiment induce an importation of essence from America, besides obviating the inconvenience frequently and severely felt, for want of bark, it will greatly tend to enlarge the exports of Ireland to America, as one of the greatest impediments to our exports, was the difficulty of procuring returns. Bark in substance, from the nature of its stowage, would scarce be admitted on freight at three guineas per ton, while the freight of a ton of essence, cost of cask included, will scarce amount to twelve shillings.

On the Extraction of the Essence of Bark recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes:
<https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/43>