

NEWS RELEASE
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LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP INTO “CUCUMBER LOTION”

BACKYARD HORTICULTURE
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With an abundance of backyard cucumbers, a recipe appearing in the newspaper concerning a use for this surplus looked very interesting to us. The article gave the formula for a “cucumber lotion” as it was called, and promised to result in a refreshing skin lotion. We have tried many other recipes for this vegetable from pickles to tempura, but a low-cost lotion was certainly a different use. The results, although stretching the definition of the word refreshing, were indeed different.

The article indicated that one should first run about 6 large cucumbers through a juicer or blender and then strain the pulp through cheesecloth. We dutifully cut up our perfectly good fruits and followed the directions. The resulting 4 cups of juice was a dark green, watery liquid with a pleasant odor. So far so good.

The next addition was $\frac{1}{4}$ cup isopropyl alcohol or rubbing alcohol. This did not change the color or consistency of our “lotion” but did give it the characteristic rubbing alcohol smell. The recipe then called for 1 cup of glycerin. This is a common ingredient in many hand lotions and seemed like a reasonable addition. The problem with this was the cost – almost \$3 for one small bottle. Even though the cucumbers were free, our supposedly low-cost lotion now comes to more than many commercial preparations. While homemade is often better than store-bought, in this case, leave it to the experts.

The resulting product from these efforts so far has resulted in a watery, dark green, alcohol-smelling liquid that is slightly sticky. We figured that perhaps the last ingredient, one speck of benzoic acid, was the key to the promised refreshing, soothing lotion. Since the recipe indicated the local drug store was the place to obtain this chemical, that's where we headed. The article was correct about the source, but unless you want to make about 100 gallons of this potion, leave out the benzoic acid. It apparently only comes in one-pound amounts, at least at the drug store we checked, and costs over \$15. Since only a speck was called for of this preservative, and what we had so far was not really worth preserving, our attempt at homemade cucumber lotion ended here.

The results of this would indicate that cucumbers are great for salads, pickles, and relish, but as a skin lotion, at least with the recipe in the newspaper, save your time and money, and save your good garden produce for eating.

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