

Sprinkler Day



Here's a last minute idea for your Fourth of July celebration (or you can do it any day in the summer). There's a kiddie element to this celebration and an adult portion later on.

In my old neighborhood Sprinkler Day was the official first day of Summer. I know it wasn't one of those official adult holidays like Flag Day or the Fourth of July. Sprinkler Day was a kids holiday and it was "way more" important. Sprinkler Day was that first really hot day after school let out. Mom would let us put on our swimsuits get the sprinkler out, hook it to the hose, snake both across the lawn and begin the celebration. We'd turn that baby on full blast! It didn't matter if it was one of those sprinklers that whizzed around in a circle or if this year's model was one of the ones that fanned back and forth. Either would do.

We didn't complain when that first cold blast crashed across our legs like a wave off Lake Michigan. We squealed with delight. We didn't even cry if we got water up our noses and in our eyes. We were in sprinkler heaven. Sprinkler Day was the best!

I now know how much of a saint my mother was by how much damage she let us do to the yard. After sliding across the grass for 2

or 3 hours we'd soaked the lawn so deeply the water and dirt would squish up between our toes. Every blade of grass was smashed down from us sliding across on our bellies and crashing into each other in the process. It took days and sometimes longer for the lawn to recover. Mom didn't seem to mind. That was one night of the summer, when after dinner we seemed to give her no trouble when it was time for bed. We went directly upstairs with no whining and slept soundly that night because we were what we called in the old neighborhood "pooped".

So how do we refresh ourselves as adults after a hard day? Running around in the sprinkler sounds pretty good right now, but... (you can fill this in with a million things that keep us from having "kid fun"). My refreshing time comes after long day by spending just a few quiet minutes on my balcony. Sometimes I just sit in a lounge chair and try to spot hummingbirds. Sometimes I page through a catalog with no intention of buying a thing. I'm just relaxing. And then when guests arrive for a dinner party, I'm ready for them with refreshment too. We call it the "Drink of the Day".

The Drink of the Day is a great way to kick off a summer party or any party. The best part is it makes your job as hostess or host easier. Over 50% of your guests will choose the Drink of the Day if you make up a pitcher before they arrive. People like to try new things. It gets them past the usual "I'll just have a glass of wine or beer" line that begins most parties. The Drink of the Day can be connected to the party theme. If it's Mexican food it can be a takeoff of a margarita or sangria. If it's a French theme it can be a French Martini that kicks off the party. Here I'm going to give you a standard formula for dreaming up your own customized Drinks of the Day. The Drink of the Day also makes clean up easier and it's easier on your budget not to have to stock a full bar for a party. Try it. You'll find it almost as refreshing as Sprinkler Day.

The Formula for The Drink of the Day:

Step 1: Choose two liquors. The ones that work best are white or dark rum and vodka. The vodka or rum can be flavored or regular; it depends on the drink you are making.

Step 2: Choose a fruit juice and a “thinner.” What’s a thinner? It might be club soda, sparkling water, or it might even be a lot of ice that you are counting on to thin out the drink and make it less potent.

There are so many combinations I can’t count. When you get the hang of this, you might choose one of your liquors to be Southern Comfort, a whiskey (rye), or even a bourbon or brandy. I don’t recommend gin (except with tonic) or scotch (Scottish whiskey) for a drink-of-the-day ingredient. The people who drink gin and scotch are pretty Puritan in how they want it served, and those two options are difficult, for the most part, to mix with too many other things.

The juices and sodas are pretty endless. Any kind of fruit juice makes the grade. Most white sodas work well (ala 7-Up) and the others you can experiment with to your taste. Don’t forget lemonade and iced tea as possible candidates.

When you get really fancy, you might start using liqueurs as an ingredient.

Step 3: Name your drink. The drink can have a name that goes along with the theme of your party.

Step 4: Don’t forget the non-alcohol drinkers and the designated drivers. You can make a non-alcoholic version of any Drink of the Day. Just leave out the “booze” and toss in a sparkling water instead.

Keep in mind if you want your drinks less potent, you can always

add MORE sparkling water. I like to put in just enough liquor so they can still taste it. This seems to remind them that they are drinking alcohol and not a fruit punch so they are more careful. Try to keep the proportions at least four times higher on the juice/sparkling water than the alcohol and remind everyone to drink responsibly. Enjoy your summer and may every day be as fun as Sprinkler Day.

Enjoy!

Cheers,