Sheepshower Wine Pulled The Wool Over Their Eyes

SOMETIMES I'll think back 50 years to those hot summers in Sapulpa, Oklahoma when I was 8 or 10, and my brothers, cousins and I made sheepshower wine.

When we started seeing those little purplish red plants that grew close to the ground, we knew it was time. We called it sheepshower, but the actual name was sheep sorrel.

I'm guessing we copied the recipe from my Grandpa Riggle's elderberry wine recipe. We took a quart canning jar—packed with sheepshower leaves to the top—added a half cup of sugar and filled the jar with water.

Then we placed a lid and ring on the jar and buried it a foot deep for a month or two.

I don't believe we ever waited the full fermentation time. I do remember sneaking around behind the barn and passing that quart jar around with my friends.

You had to act like it was good. After all, it was wine, we thought, and the grown-ups didn't know about it.

I think it had a sweet yet unpleasantly acid taste. After we'd all passed it around, the jar was usually set aside and forgotten until about next spring, when we'd try again.

There was no alcohol in it, but we were convinced that it was the real thing.

There must be 10 or 15 jars of sheepshower wine still buried in the old neighborhood. A month or two was a long time for preteens to

hold a thought.

I've often wondered if sheepshower wine was a local thing, or if kids in other areas made "wine," too.

—Jerry W., Sapulpa, Oklahoma