

Azure Bitterspice Tea

Description: Azure Bitterspice is a fern-like plant colored a vivid blue-white. It grows only in areas contaminated with eldritch energies from ice-affected magical disasters; the kind associated with entire neighborhoods or towns vanishing in the snow, never to return. Azure Bitterspice should *never* be touched with bare hands: the leaves need a half hour of immersion in boiling water before they can be safely handled.

Effects: Preservation. Someone who drinks a cup of Azure Bitterspice Tea (it tastes awful, by the way) will swiftly slip into a frozen state where all life functions almost cease to function, **very much** including bleeding. This is effectively suspended animation, and lasts for as long as the subject is in an environment that is below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Some people have been frozen for more than a century without ill effects.

Well, you know: when life gives you a magically-mutated fern plant that thrives in the post-apocalyptic wastelands left over when a bunch of realms kept throwing Death Ice spells at each other until they ran out of realms, you make foul-tasting tea. It sounds more pithy in the language that

the saying originally came from, though. A bit more pithy, at least.

Then again, these days that particular area is more like *post-post-apocalyptic*, you know what I mean? They put the towers back up, reopened the mines, gingerly refounded a bunch of towns, got some new art and culture to replace all the stuff turned to corrosive snow, and even set up some new realms (preferably ones smart enough not to go the Death Ice Magic route, but the jury's still out on that). Even the aforementioned wastelands are now being exploited for resources. Turns out that residual ice-aspected eldritch energy fields can produce some interesting stuff, as witnessed by the popularity of Azure Bitterspice Tea.

You see, the various regional militaries love the stuff: give a dying soldier a drink of it, and he'll stop dying long enough to get the chance to be brought to a healer or physician, who can then hopefully actually heal him. It's also considered a humane way to keep prisoners of war. They drink the Tea, lie down somewhere out of the way, and stay put, nice and quiet and exceedingly unlikely to escape. Wake 'em up when the war's over, and everybody's getting exchanged: in the meantime, you

don't have to feed them or do much more than put a roof over their recumbent heads.

But you do have to *guard* them, still. Naturally achieving a temperature of 100 degrees in even a post-post-Death Ice apocalypse area is essentially unnatural, which means that if the temperature rises to that level it's because somebody did something deliberately. Which is why all shipments of frozen patients and/or prisoners of war will have an armed escort. You never know when a routine escort mission may become, well, an **adventure**.

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