

## Grow your own

# Edible Flowers

### EAT THE FLOWERS!

Many avant-garde restaurants have salads or main courses covered in fresh exotic blooms or even sugared and candied flowers, the 21<sup>st</sup> century's equivalent of parsley. Buying edible flowers is expensive and the flowers are fragile. By "growing your own", you are assured of their freshness and that they are grown organically.

### HARVESTING AND STORING EDIBLE FLOWERS

Edible usually refers to the petals only. Remove them from the other parts of the flower before eating as well as any attached sepals. Edible flowers should ideally be harvested in the cool, morning hours. If not using the flowers immediately, you can store them in damp paper towels, in the refrigerator.

### SELECTING EDIBLE FLOWERS

Only eat flowers when you are absolutely certain they are edible. Just because a flower is used as a garnish, doesn't mean it's edible. Never eat a flower that has been treated with a pesticide that was not labeled for use on food products. Never eat flowers from florists or roadsides. Most herb flowers are safe to eat; their flavour is milder and sweeter than the leaves. Try growing dill, fennel, arugula, basil, chives, cilantro, dill, garlic chives, mustard, and society garlic.

What is best about edible flowers is that they are as beautiful in the garden as they are tasty in the kitchen. They are dual-purpose plants that can be included in any type of garden - formal, cottage, or mixed border. No matter where you grow them, pick them like fruit-in their prime-and enjoy them for all their attributes.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	TYPE	BLOOMING MONTHS	FLOWER USE COMMENTS
Balloon flower	<i>Platycodon grandiflorus</i>	perennial	June to Aug.	Salad, stuffed, crystallized, butter. Chewable consistency. Sweet taste.
Bee balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	perennial	June to Aug.	Salad, tea, lemonade. Sweet taste. Edible leaves.
Carnation Sweet William	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i> , <i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	annuals/biennials	May to Sept.	Salad, crystallized, butter, lemonade, garnish. Strongly scented, nutmeg aroma.
Common dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	annual	May to June	Salad, crystallized. Young leaves and buds are edible. Pick all the blossoms.
Common sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	annual	Aug. to Sept.	Salad, soup. Edible seeds.
Common yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	annual	June to Aug.	Herbal tea, tea, lemonade. Leaves and fruit also edible.
Garden snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	annual	May to Sept.	Salad, crystallized. Strong odour, use moderately.
Scented Geranium	<i>Pelargonium spp.</i>	annual	May to Sept.	Salad, crystallized, flower water, garnish. Leaves of species can be used for steeping.
Lady's eardrops	<i>Fuchsia spp.</i>	annual	May to Sept.	Crystallized, marinated, garnish.
Marigold	<i>Tagetes lucida</i> , <i>Tagetes patula</i> , <i>Tagetes tenuifolia</i>	annual	May to Sept.	Salad, herbal tea, garnish. Saffron substitute. Some cultivars have citrus tastes.
Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	annual	May to Sept.	Salad, butter, stuffed, crystallized. Taste close to watercress. Rich in vitamin C. Buds, seeds and leaves edible.
Pansy	<i>Viola tricolor</i> , <i>Viola x wittrockiana</i>	annual	May to Sept..	Salad, crystallized, butter. Remove the bitter stem before using
Pot marigold	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	annual	May to Sept.	Salad, soup, butter, sauce, drinks, cookies. Saffron substitute. Edible buds.
Violet	<i>Viola cornuta</i> , <i>Viola odorata</i>	perennial	May to Sept	Salad, vinegar, butter, tea, syrup, jelly. Strongly scented. Edible leaves.



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