

Garden Talk

Edible Flowers

Well-placed culinary blooms are surprisingly delicious and bring unique and elegant beauty to the table. Many edible flowers are common garden plants, which provides even more encouragement for everyday gardeners to take advantage of petaled delights. They are not just for chefs and connoisseurs anymore.



There are a few caveats to eating edible flowers. First, never eat flowers from a florist as these have often been sprayed with chemicals. In turn, never spray your flowers in the garden if you intend to eat them. Even pesticides and herbicides approved for organic gardening are a no no. Flowers are too delicate to wash, so if you intend to consume them, let nature tend to them. If you are allergy-prone, it's probably best to forego consumption of flowers all together.

Remember, you need only a few blossoms to really impress your dinner guests!

Anise Hyssop	Tastes like: sweet, anise-like, licorice
Arugula	Tastes like: nutty, spicy, peppery flavor
Basil	Tastes like: different varieties have different milder flavors of the corresponding leaves. Tastes like: lemon, mint.
Bee Balm	Used to make a tea with a flavor similar to Earl Grey Tea.
Borage	Taste like: light cucumber flavor.
Burnet	Tastes like: faint cucumber flavor, very mild.
Calendula	Tastes like: poor man's saffron, spicy, tangy, peppery, adds a golden hue to foods
Carnation	Tastes like: spicy, peppery, clove-like
Chamomile	Tastes like: faint apple flavor, good as a tea
Chicory	Buds can be pickled.
<u>Chives</u> : Garden	Tastes like: mild onion flavor.
<u>Chives</u> : Garlic	Tastes like: garlicky flavor
<u>Citrus</u> : Lemon	Tastes like: waxy, pronounced flavor, use sparingly as an edible garnish, good for making citrus waters
Coriander	Pungent. A prime ingredient in salsas and many Latino and Oriental dishes. Tastes like: Some palates detect a disagreeable soapy flavor while others adore it.
Cornflower	Tastes like: sweet to spicy, clove-like

Dandelion	Tastes like: very young buds fried in butter taste similar to mushrooms. Makes a potent wine.
English Daisy	Tastes like: tangy, leafy
Fennel	Tastes like: sweet, licorice flavor.
Fuchsia	Tastes like: slightly acidic
Gardenia	Tastes like: light, sweet flavor
Gladiolus	Tastes like: similar to lettuce
Hibiscus	Tastes like: slightly acidic, boiled makes a nice beverage
Hollyhock	Tastes like: very bland, nondescript flavor
Impatiens	Tastes like: very bland, nondescript flavor
Lemon Verbena	Tastes like: lemony flavor, usually steeped for tea
Lilac	Tastes like: lemony, floral, pungent
<u>Mallow: Common</u>	Tastes like: sweet, delicate flavor
<u>Marigold: Signet</u>	Tastes like: spicy to bitter
Nasturtium	Buds are often pickled and used like capers. Tastes like: sweet, mildly pungent, peppery flavor
Okra	Tastes like: similar to squash blossoms
Pansy	Tastes like: very mild sweet to tart flavor
Radish	Tastes like: milder, sweeter version of the more familiar radish heat
Redbud	Tastes like: mildly sweet
Rose	Tastes like: sweet, aromatic flavor, stronger fragrance produces a stronger flavor. Be sure to remove the bitter white portion of the petals. Rose hips are also edible
Rosemary	Tastes like: pine-like, sweet, savory.
Runner Bean	Tastes like: nectar, bean-like
Safflower	Another "poor man's saffron" without the pungent aroma or strong flavor
Scented Geranium	Citronella variety may not be edible. Tastes like: varies with differing varieties from lemon to mint.
Snapdragon	Tastes like: bland to bitter flavor
Society Garlic	Tastes like: a very mild garlic flavor
Squash Blossom	Tastes like: sweet, nectar flavor.
Sunflower	Tastes like: leafy, slightly bitter. Lightly steam petals to lessen bitterness. Unopened flower buds can be steamed like artichokes.
Thyme	Tastes like: lemon, adds a nice light scent.
Violet	Tastes like: sweet, nectar
(Banana) Yucca	Flowers (petals only) and fruit are edible. Other parts contain saponin, which is poisonous. Large amounts may be harmful. Tastes like: crunchy, fresh flavor
Flowers to Avoid	Some flowers in <i>particular</i> to be avoided (but not a complete list) are: azalea, crocus, daffodil, foxglove, oleander, rhododendron, jack-in-the-pulpit, lily of the valley, and wisteria.

*Only the petals of these composite flowers are edible. The pollen of composite flowers is highly allergenic and may cause reactions in sensitive individuals. Sufferers of asthma, ragweed, and hayfever should not consume composite flowers, and may have extreme allergies to ingesting any flowers at all.