

Edible Flowers



What are “edible flowers”?

Edible flowers are flowers that are used as a garnish or as an integral part of a dish, such as a salad.

Are all flowers edible? No. Those that are must usually be home grown or purchased from speciality produce markets or supermarkets that carry gourmet produce. Flowers that have been sprayed with pesticides, (such as those found at florists’) should

never be eaten. Separate growing areas should be used when growing your own edible flowers. Do not plant other annuals or perennials in these areas because pesticides should not be used. If you don’t know whether the plant has been treated with chemicals, do not eat it!

What flowers are edible? Some of the more popular edible flowers are:

Apple, *Malus species*
 Bee Balm, *Monarda didyma*
 Borage, *Borago officinalis*
 Burnet, *Sanguisorba minor*
 Carnation, *Dianthus species*
 Catnip, *Nepeta cataria*
 Chamomile, *Matricaria chamomilla*
 Chicory, *Cichorium intybus*
 Chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*
 Chrystanthemum, *Chrystanthemum species*
 Clary, *Salvia sclarea*
 Costmary, *Chrysanthemum baslimita*
 Dandelion, *Taraxacum oficinale*
 Day Lily, *Hemerocallis fulva*
 Elder, *Sambucus nigra*
 Garlic, *Allium strivum*
 Gladiolus, *Gladiolus species*
 Grape Hyacinth, *Muscari atlanticum botryoides*
 Hollyhock, *Althea rosea*

Honeysuckle, *Lonicera species*
 Hyssop, *Hyssopus officinalis*
 Jasmine, *Jasminum species*
 Jonquil, *Narcissus jonquilla*
 Lavender, *Lavandula officinalis*
 Lemon, *Citrus limomum*
 Lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*
 Lovage, *Levisticum officinale*
 Marigold, *Calendula officinalis*
 Mimosa, *Mimosa pudica*
 Motherwort, *Leonurus cardiaca*
 Nasturtium, *Tropaeolum majos*
 Orange Blossom, *Citrus species*
 Pansy, *Viola species*
 Passionflower, *Passiflora coerulea*
 Peony, *Paeoniaceae species*
 Plum Blossom, *Prunus species*
 Primrose, *Primula vulgaris*
 Rose, *Rosa species*
 Rosemary, *Rosemarinum officinalis*
 Saffron, *Crocus sativus*
 Squash Blossoms, *Cucubita species*
 St. John’s Wort, *Hypericum or botryoides perforatum*
 Sunflower, *Helianthus annus*
 Thyme, *Thymus species*
 Tulip, *Tulipa species*
 Verbena, *Verbena species*
 Violet, *Viola odorata*
 Yucca, *Yucca filameniosa*

May I eat the whole flower? In most cases the petals are eaten. Stems, pistils, and stamens (the male and female parts in the center of the blossom) should be removed for best flavor.

How are edible flowers used? Edible flowers may be used in a variety of culinary ways. They make colorful, striking garnishes for drinks as well as food -- for everything from salads to soups to desserts. Some of the larger flowers such as squash blossoms can be stuffed and deep-fried.

How are edible flowers prepared? When portions of edible flowers are desired, pull petals or edible portions from fresh flowers and snip off the petals from the base of the flower. Remember to always wash flowers thoroughly. Give them a gentle bath in salt water and then dip the petals in ice to perk them up. Drain on paper towels. For later use, petals and whole flowers may be stored a short time in plastic bags in a refrigerator. Freeze whole small flowers in ice rings or cubes.

For further reading and recipes:

- “A Feast of Flowers”, by Francesca Tillona and Cynthia Strowbridge
- “The Gardener’s Handbook of Edible Plants”, by Rosalind Creasy
- “The Kitchen Garden”, by Sylvia Thompson
- “The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping”, by Rosalind Creasy
- “Gifts from Your Garden”, by Joan Scobey and Norma Myers
- “The Flower Cookbook”, by Adrienne Crowhurst

Persons with food allergies or other medical questions should contact a physician.

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