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An Edible Flower Garden

By John Sanderson

To most of us, the idea of eating flowers evokes the humorous image of someone biting into a rose, or chomping off the head of a daisy. Yet there was a time not so very long ago that flowers were an integral part of cooking. While most of us are aware that violets can be candied and nasturtiums eaten in salad, there's a truly amazing variety of flowers that are not only edible, but delicious!

A Candy Flower Garden for Your Sweet Tooth Violets aren't the only flower that can be candied! Many of the spring flowers with small, delicate blossoms have a sweet, slightly spicy flavor that is enhanced by dipping in sugar. It goes without saying that any flowers that you gather for eating should not have been sprayed with any pesticide - by growing them yourself, you can be sure that they're untreated. A Candy Flower Garden that blooms throughout the summer can include:

Violets - of course! Purple, blue or white, violets are among the first flowers to bloom in the spring. They spread easily, and grow readily when transplanted into a garden bed - and you do want to confine them to a bed unless you love the look of a full carpet of blooms spreading across your lawn.

Pansies - A relative of violets, pansies are just as delicately flavored and can be used in most recipes that call for violets. They make beautiful border flowers, with their bright painted faces.

Angelica - These delicate, lacy white flowers can be sprinkled in salads - but the stems and shoots make a delicious traditional candy that tastes a bit like minty licorice.

Roses - yes, roses! Candied rose petals and rose syrup were mainstays in Victorian cooking. Sweet delicately flavored rose syrup gives baklava its characteristic flavor, and is a perfect foil for cardamom in Indian recipes.

To candy flowers from your garden: Violets and pansies can be candied whole. Roses should be separated into petals. Most recipes for candied flowers call for the use of raw egg whites. Because of the danger of salmonella, I recommend using a confectioner's powdered egg white instead.

Mix powdered egg white according to package directions (equivalent of one egg white).

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Spread a cup of superfine sugar in a flat bottomed pan. Carefully dip each flower into the egg white, then press into the sugar. Use a fork to gently turn the flower so that all surfaces of the petals are covered. Lift out of sugar and lay on a screen or drying rack till completely dry. Apple and cherry blossoms can also be candied the same way.

A Soup, Salad and Savory Flower Garden

When I was growing up, one of the most special treats of early summer was my grandmother's fried squash blossoms. Dipped in egg and flower, then fried in olive oil with garlic, the blossoms have a sweet, nutty flavor that is like nothing else in this world. Other garden flowers that are delicious in soups and salads include:

Borage - Like the leaves, borage flowers are delicious in salads and cold soups. They have a cool, cucumber like taste that translates well from flower garden to kitchen table.

Carnations - The flavor is as spicy as the scent. Carefully separate the petals from the bitter white of the flower's base and sprinkle in salads for a surprising touch of color and spice.

Daylilies - Like squash blossoms, day lilies have a mildly sweet, nutty flavor that many people think varies by color. Dredged in flour and dipped in egg, fried daylilies are a succulent vegetable.

Those are just a small sampling of the many edible uses of flowers from your garden. If you're interested in learning more, you'll find excellent recipes and information on edible flowers at a number of web sites on the internet. DO be careful in your taste-testing. If you're not certain that a flower is edible do NOT eat it.

This article courtesy of

<http://www.gardening-answers.com>

Eating Edible Flowers

By Amanda Baker

After a family member's recent stay in the hospital, you find yourself with a whole houseful of flowers. You've heard of using flowers to decorate dishes or for use in recipes. However, before you go plucking the petals off the flowers in those arrangements, there are a few things that you need to know.

Flowers that are said to be edible are only edible if they are either grown organically or treated with organic pesticides like those used on fruits or vegetables. Flowers that are from florists, nurseries or garden centers are grown for decoration only. They're usually chemically treated either by fertilizers or pesticides. They aren't safe to be eaten unless you know for certain that they've been maintained organically. Do not eat flowers growing on the side of the road! The chemicals used to maintain

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roadside conditions are deadly and the emissions from cars contaminate the flowers growing there. Your safest method is to grow the flowers yourself, so that you know with a complete certainty what's gone into growing the flowers.

Although a flower may be edible, it may not be palatable to some people's tastes. What might taste good to you may not taste even slightly appealing to someone close to you. Also keep individual allergies in mind before testing out a recipe. A little consideration goes a long, long way and could save you a trip to the hospital.

Before cooking with or eating edible flowers, remember to only eat the petals. The pistils and stamens of a flower should not be consumed. Until you've tested the effects of a single flower, it's best not to ingest large quantities of any blossom, no matter how safe it may seem at the time.

Some of the most common flowers said to be edible are apple blossoms, carnations, chrysanthemums, dandelions, geraniums, marigolds, honeysuckle, pansies, tulips – even lillies and roses! There are so many more edible flowers out there, and recipes are available all over the internet. There are also cookbooks devoted solely to using these beautiful blooms.

So, the next time you've got some freshly cut flowers serving as a centerpiece for your company, you might want to reach up and have a little snack – as long as no one is watching!

Amanda Baker writes for All Things Pondered:

<http://allthingspondered.com>



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