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Growing The Greatest Flowers Around

By **Ken Snowie**

Most every gardener strives to grow the best, most stunning flowers around, but that goal is hard to

get hold of. Whether you want to raise prize-winning blooms or just have a home garden filled with beautiful flowers, there are some things you can do in order to ensure your garden is in the best shape possible.

Soil chemistry counts The chemical make-up of the soil is one of the biggest factors that contribute to the success or failure of your garden. If the soil in your planting beds is poor in nutrients, it is unlikely that your plants will thrive or produce those beautiful flowers that you want until you enrich the soil with the nutrition the plants need.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that the soil chemistry is the same all over your yard. It is important to test the soil in each area of your property that you plan to plants, especially if the areas are away from each other. This can be important if part of your property is on a slope, or if it has been used for other things in the past.

The slope of the land and the soil type in your area are important considerations to make. A complete analysis of the soil in your yard will give you a good place to starts and a help you to monitor the quality of the soil as your garden matures.

Know what your plants will need to thrive You probably already have an idea about what you want to plant in your garden, so it is important that you understand what those plants will require in order to grow and flourish. Although many types of annuals, perennials, and bulbs can grow and thrive in a broad range of soil and weather conditions, others can have special requirements for food, water, and soil conditions.

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For example, if you are interested in cultivating roses in your garden, you will need to know the pH level of your soil, and adjust it if you need to. Roses are commonly acid loving plants, and therefore they will not thrive in soil with a higher alkaline level. Getting some humus and tilling it into the soil can amend alkaline soil. If the humus does not do the job, adding sulfur to the soil can raise the acidity level.

Keeping an eye on nutrition The nutrients in the soil will dictate the health and vitality of your plants and flowers. If the phosphorus and nitrogen levels, as well as the presence of other types of organic matter are not sufficient, your plants may be malnourished, and not thrive at all. Nutrients can be added to poor soil by using humus or any number of good-quality fertilizers.

Now you understand why the chemistry of your garden soil is so important in growing your ideal garden. Having the best flowers around is a big task to fulfill. Make sure that your garden soil is ready for the duty.

To learn more about flower gardening and receive a free flower gardening report visit

<http://www.discover-flower-gardening.info>

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 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.

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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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