

Edible Flowers

Written by RSF

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Flowers make beautiful garnish for salads.
Choose small flowers - that is when they are at their best

Anise hyssop flowers: purple or blue with an anise flavor; great with salads and fruit.

Arugula flowers: Mild in taste; good in sandwiches and salads.

Borage: purple and pink flowers with a sweet cucumber-like taste; adds coolness to drinks.

Calendula: Orange, white or yellow blossoms with mild, slightly peppery taste; use the petals in salads.

Chamomile: Delicate white flowers with yellow centers; mild and sweet for tea, salads, and as garnish.

Chive Flowers: Light purple, globe-shaped flowers with a mild chive flavor.

Chrysanthemums: Range in taste from faint peppery to mild cauliflower; blanch first and then scatter the petals on a salad. (Try the leaves in a vinaigrette.)

Daisies: Yellow and white flowers with yellow centers; mild, with a light mint or clover flavor. (Use just the petals; the centers are unpleasantly hard.)

Day lilies: Shades of orange and yellow; dramatic, slightly sweet-tasting bloom; use to decorate salads or cakes.

Geranium; (Scented): Pink, red, white or purple, with tastes ranging from lemon to rose to mint; use in salads or to garnish a cake. (Use the leaves sparingly; they are strong!)

Hollyhocks: Pastel colors; slightly sweet; particularly good stuffed.

Honeysuckle: Pale red or yellow in color; tastes just like it smells.

Lavender: Strongly flavored, purple-flowered member of the mint family, good for marinades, jellies and garnishes. Use sparingly.

Marigolds: Yellow and orange; mildly peppery flavor is wonderful in salads, sauces, soups, or with fish or roasts. Use only the petals.

Nasturtium flowers/leaves: Yellow, orange, red, rust or dark brown with a peppery, radish-like flavor.

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Pansies: Multicolored, with a mild grape or clover taste.

Rose Petals: A taste as delicate as the smell of a rose; used for centuries in rose water, jellies and jams, teas, and as crystallized decoration. Sprinkle petals over salads.

Squash blooms: orange color, very mild zucchini-like flavor; a staple in Italian cooking, stuffed, sauteed and fried. Most flowers are one to three inches deep - perfect for stuffing. The flavor is best described as mildly vegetable.

Violas and Violets: Little bluish-purple flowers with a sweet taste; good in salads, honey, or crystallized.

Monarda - Bee Balm: From the mint family, flavor can be described as citrusy, sweet, hot and minty. Makes an excellent tea. Decorate a scoop of ice cream with a few petals.

Dianthus - Pinks: Flowers have a sweet clove flavor that is quite versatile in the kitchen. Use in cordials, syrups, vinegars and butters.

Hibiscus - Hawaiian Hibiscus (not hardy): Main culinary contribution are the luscious colors and the mild citrus/cranberry flavor that it imparts to teas.

Pineapple Sage: The flavor of the flowers is wonderful - sweet and fruity with a hint of spice and mint.

Rose of Sharon - Shrub: Before they open, the flowers have a nutty flavor: after, they are mildly sweet.

Rosemary: supposed to bring good luck, fend off witches, and disinfect the air. The pale blue flowers have a flavor reminiscent of the leaves, but much less pungent.

Sweet Woodruff - Galium: The white flowers are sweet smelling and tasting with a nutty, vanilla flavor.

Tuberous Begonia: The flowers have no scent to give any clue to its flavor. Surprisingly the flower has a tangy citrus taste. Use the petals to decorate a salad or as garnish.