



# 99 Edible Flowers Found in The UK

Explore your garden in a totally different way – eat your way through it! You will be amazed at the flowers that you can munch on, put in salads, dress cocktails up, etc. Impress your friends with your knowledge at dinner parties. Spice up the food you eat – add colour, flavours, and create visually appealing dishes.

Enjoy...

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# Introduction

Eating flowers isn't a new or trendy idea thought up by Michelin chefs adorning their creations with a pretty flower or two. The Victorians started the trend of decorating food with flowers to impress their dinner guests – a sort of one-upmanship. Mind you, as some of the flowers are poisonous, I wonder who was given the job of trying them out. The scullery maid, perhaps?

Before that, many of the flowers listed below (and of course the plants themselves) would have been eaten for their medicinal benefits, way back in time. In fact, Hippocrates said, "For every illness known to man, there is a remedy in nature".

How true that is! So many of these plants contain astonishing amounts of minerals and vitamins. Indeed, thousands of plants are used in modern medicine, with more discoveries regularly being made. The pharmaceutical companies make fortunes packaging their benefits as a pill. In modern society, it is easier to pop one of the pills for, say, a headache than it is to go foraging for feverfew to make a tea with.

The good news is that you can explore the many benefits that nature has to offer in your own back garden. In fact, you probably haven't realised that many of the flowers you enjoy smelling and admiring are not only delicious as a food source but highly beneficial to your wellbeing too. Remember what Hippocrates said!

You can choose from a vast variety of edible flowers to make savoury and sweet dishes, cordials, and butters. You can grow various annuals and perennials in your flower borders or vegetable plots and allotments that make delicious edible flowers from Spring through to Autumn. In addition, the use of edible flowers can encourage children to take an interest in growing their own food and preparing it themselves (bear in mind our warning below – children must be supervised and educated).

The best time to gather the flowers that you need is early in the morning, preferably after the dew has evaporated. Gently pick them off the plants, leaving some for the bees and other beneficial insects.

The sugars and volatile oils that are the basis for aroma and flavour are highest before the day's heat and photosynthesis convert them into starch. Therefore, choose flowers at their peak, avoiding those that are not fully open or starting to wilt.

Place the picked flowers carefully into a container, discarding any damaged or diseased blooms - especially those that have been attacked by insects. Gently flick off any dirt or bugs and store clean blossoms in a rigid container in your fridge to prevent crushing.

We use a manual salad spinner for some of the more robust flowers to get any excess moisture off. Use them as soon as possible or put them in an airtight bag in the fridge.

If you reside in a town or city and do not have a garden or other space in which to grow the flowers, the alternative is to buy them online from a grower who specialises in edible flowers. We have a great resource in our home county of Norfolk (UK), where you can buy all kinds of edible flowers online. Please check the Resources Section at the end of this book. This is the type of place where the top chefs get their edible flowers to garnish their dishes. It is big business, as you will see when you explore their website.

We have also found a specialist grower in Devon, which we have listed at the end.

By the way – if you are just starting out and need some edible flowers to practice cake decoration etc. with, simply search for 'edible flowers, in google. My search took me to Amazon, where there were quite a few to choose from.

*Let's now explore the world of edible flowers, and you may find some surprises!*

## IMPORTANT

There are some flowers/plants that are not edible - trying some of them can make you extremely ill. If you know your plants, you will be able to identify most of the more common ones (i.e., fuchsia, forsythia, daisy and so on), but if you are in any doubt, avoid them or buy them online from a reputable supplier. Some flowers have look-alikes that you should not try.

These days, the main problem is that so many pesticides are used on plants that the chemicals contaminate the plant – and you can't simply wash them off the flowers. So please – avoid any flowers that may have been treated with pesticides. And whatever you do, do not pick flowers along the roadside and verges for eating.

The other point to bear in mind is that some of the edible wildflowers are becoming scarce. So, the only way to do this is to grow them yourself in your garden and pick them when you want to use some.

Our garden is full of edible flowers, interspersed with other plants, flowers and bushes. It is a truly colourful display and an array of delights with which to garnish our food. I consider myself incredibly lucky. My wife is a fabulous cook and can turn her hand to any kind of cuisine. She instinctively knows what to do with the vegetables, herbs, and edible flowers that are growing around the garden. It is probably why I wrote this book – she would spot a flower, then spend time googling whether it was edible or whether it was safe to garnish one dish or another. So, I decided to compile this alphabetical list, which has become her edible flower' bible'. It has become indispensable – and I got loads of brownie points. Mind you; I used them up rather quickly...



Below is a list of flowers you should *never* eat.

Arum lily



This plant contains a toxin called calcium oxalate crystals, which, in its raw state, gives a sensation of you chewing needles. This can be prevented by cooking or drying the plant, but I feel it is safest just to avoid it altogether.

Azalea



A beautiful plant, but nasty...extremely toxic and could prove fatal if ingested.

## Buttercup



Daisies and buttercups go together – or do they? No. Whilst you can eat daisy flowers, buttercup flowers can cause blistering of your mouth and skin.

When dried, buttercups are harmless. As such, they will be in the hay fed to cattle and are harmless in that form. Animals tend to stay away from live buttercups.

## Bluebells



Bluebells contain toxic glycoside in every part of the plant.

## Castor oil Plant



The seeds are poisonous to humans, animals, and insects. In addition, castor beans contain a substance called ricin, which is highly toxic, and used in many assassination plots. Stay well clear! (It was only whilst researching this book that I found this out. I had a beautiful castor oil plant in my flower border. It is no longer in there – we have pets and grandkids).

## Chinese Lantern Plant



This is not exactly a flower – or is it? Either way, I thought to include it in the list of things not to eat, as it is not too dissimilar in looks to Cape Gooseberry, which you can happily eat. The Chinese Lantern plant goes well in flower arrangements, and the fruits can be used in skilled hands to make jams. However, the unripe berries are very toxic and can prove fatal, so it is best to steer clear of them as edible flowers.

## Clematis



Contact with clematis (mouth or skin) can irritate due to its mild but toxic nature.

## Daffodils



Daffodils contain the toxin called lycorine, which makes it extremely dangerous to eat any part of the plant. Whilst most of the toxin is in the bulb, any part of the plant will cause problems if it is eaten.

## Dogbane



Dogbane tastes bitter, and all parts of this plant are toxic to both us humans and dogs. In addition, it contains poisons that affect the heart.

## Fools Parsley



This plant could be mistaken for chervil, which is why I have included it. However, it can be identified easily, as the leaves have an unpleasant smell, and the stems do not have any hairs on them. This plant can cause a burning feeling in the mouth and the throat.

## Henbane



Henbane is also known as stinking nightshade. The seeds are toxic, although the use of this plant in medicine goes way back to the 1st Century AD.

## Hyacinth



Hyacinths are toxic to humans and pets if eaten. In addition, the bulbs can be mistaken for onions or shallots.

## Hydrangeas



Hydrangeas contain a small amount of cyanide, making them dangerous. They can cause skin irritations, stomach upsets, and even coma. However, rabbits seem to be able to munch on your prize hydrangeas quite happily with no ill effects.

## Iris



The iris has attractive looking pods that toddlers might like to explore. However, we suggest you pull the seed pods off (with gloves) as they irritate the skin. They could also cause tummy upsets if ingested.

## Ivy



Keep children away from the berries of the ivy plant. Eating them can cause a burning sensation in the throat.

## Horse Chestnut



Play with the seeds, i.e., play conkers – but children might attempt to chew on them, thinking they are the same as sweet chestnuts. They are not. There are no problems whatsoever with playing conkers; the problem comes if kids try to eat them, as they are poisonous.



## Larkspur



Larkspur contains toxic alkaloids that have a fast-acting effect.

It is pretty; however, eating it causes weakness of the muscles, and paralysis in humans, but goats and sheep seem to like it.

## Lily-of-the-valley



Mildly toxic, contains convallatoxin. You would have to eat a lot of it to fall ill with vomiting, nausea, blurred vision, and heart problems.

## European Oleander



European Oleander is highly toxic. The entire plant is poisonous. Avoid it at all costs.

(We lived in Spain for many years, where Oleander is grown alongside motorways and in gardens all over the place, as it is a very colourful plant). We had to be careful when pruning the bush and washed our hands afterwards, just in case.

## Foxglove



These plants are well known for affecting the heart. They contain digitoxin, which slows the heart rate and can give symptoms of a heart attack (although rare). It is a good idea to wash any fruit or veg that is growing near to foxgloves.

## Lantana



Lantana is more commonly known as Spanish Flag because of the colour of the flowers. It is widespread in Europe and is grown as an annual here, due to our climate. They say it causes mild skin irritation if touched. However, having lived in Spain for many years, this was growing freely in our garden. (I did not notice any reactions whenever I pruned the bushes). But if the berries are eaten, it could prove fatal.

## Poppy



Avoid these at all costs. The flowers of poppy plants are poisonous. The seeds from some varieties can be eaten, and there is a variety called Californian poppy that has edible flowers, but it is advisable to stay clear of this plant as an edible and grow it simply for its beauty.

## Rhododendron



Its toxins have a negative impact on blood pressure and heart rhythm. It can cause lots of nasty side effects at the very least – vomiting, a burning sensation in the mouth, nausea, stomach pains, and creeping paralysis of the limbs. All in all, it is a very poisonous plant. Funnily enough, the pesky deer will eat the bushes without any ill effects whatsoever.

## Sweet Peas



Sweet peas are not to be confused with garden peas. Ornamental sweet peas are beautiful to look at but are very poisonous.

## Tiger Lilies



Tiger lilies are toxic to humans and should not be consumed. Ingesting any part of the tiger lily plant can cause severe illness or death. It is important to keep in mind that not all plants are safe for consumption or use in recipes.



## Summary

You should never use pesticides or other chemicals on any part of a plant which produces blossoms that you intend to eat.

You should never eat flowers on plants that may have been treated with pesticides (i.e., those bought from a garden centre).

The safest way is to grow the plants yourself, so you know exactly how they were raised and that they are free from chemicals

The other way is to purchase edible flowers online, from a reputable supplier who will confirm that no chemicals have been used on them.

Roadside flowers should never be harvested for eating under any circumstances

Clearly identify the flower and eat only the edible parts of the flower.

If you have toddlers, young children etc. (grandchildren) visiting your garden, please be aware that they may play in the garden and inadvertently pop some fallen petals or berries into their mouths, thinking they are sweets. So, take care if you grow any of the above plants.

Please bear in mind that eating a lot of flowers at any one time can result in digestive complications since they are rich in organic substances.

The taste of most herb flowers is similar to that of the leaf but spicier. If you have any allergies, please make sure you know what you are eating, as certain edible flowers may not be good for you.

If a child or pet consumes an edible flower, berry or seed pod and falls ill, it goes without saying that you should seek medical assistance as soon as possible.

We left a few apparently edible flowers off our list because it is not advisable to eat them (although you could) due to possible side effects – but why risk falling ill

**Given what we have outlined above, below is a list of edible flowers that are grown in many gardens. There will undoubtedly be more, but this should cover most, if not all, the common flowers.**

# Edible Flowers A-Z





## Anise hyssop (Agastache foeniculum)



Anise hyssop has small but intensely scented flowers with a peppermint-like smell. That is not surprising as it is one of the mint family's relatives. The flowers look like lavender flowers. The plant tastes like anise; minty, with a suggestion of liquorice.

A tea made from the plant is a natural medicine used for thousands of years by Native Americans. It is thought to help relieve colds and coughs, fever, and digestive problems. In addition, the leaves help strengthen the cardiac system.

Add to drinks, use as a garnish in salad or stuffing mixes, or sprinkled over ice cream. Try adding the flowers to some whipping cream, to give it a creamy, liquorice taste. The fresh or dried leaves can be used as a substitute for fennel, anise (of course) chervil, and tarragon.

**Note:** If you are pregnant, it would be advisable not to eat these flowers.

## Alpine Pinks (*Dianthus alpinus*)



The flowers have a flavour that is not unlike clove and is ideal for blending with sugar, oils, or vinegars to enhance cakes.

## Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)



The tiny flowers of alyssum have a pungent taste with a honey-like fragrance. Add to salads, fold into omelettes, and add to gazpachos.

The plant is a natural diuretic, helping prevent water retention, and helps prevent kidney disease too.

## Amaranth (Amaranthus)



Amaranth is known more commonly as foxtail. There is also the Globe amaranth which is edible too. The vibrant burgundy flowers of the foxtail amaranth have a nutty, earthy flavour, and the Globe amaranth with its pompom shape come in several colours including pink, white and purple. As such, they go well with savoury dishes in the main, and they are used as a garnish. You can often find them adorning celebration cakes or pressed into buttercream cakes. As an interesting side note, the seeds, when dried, can be prepared and eaten like porridge or ground up as flour.

## Anchusa (Anchusa azurea)



Anchusa is also known as Italian bugloss. It grows freely in Europe and has come to settle in the UK too, which is the reason that I have added it to the list of edible flowers.

The plant is a perennial and can grow to 5 feet tall. It is incredibly attractive to wildlife.

The young flowering shoots are cooked as a vegetable, and the fresh flowers look stunning on a salad or as a garnish.

## Antirrhinum (Antirrhinum)



Most people know these as snapdragons from their childhood. They get their name because of the flowers' resemblance to a mythical dragon's face that opens and closes again when they are squeezed between the thumb and forefinger. What they don't know is that they are edible. They are a little on the bitter side when eaten, but they adorn the rim of a drinking glass, for decoration.

I have included this flower on the list, but I doubt if you would really want to eat it (although you can). They do not smell too nice, and their flavour is anywhere from bland to bitter.

## Artichokes (*Cynara cardunculus* var. *scolymus*)



I included these because they are edible flowers, albeit we don't usually eat the blooms. Instead, we eat the floral bracts before the flowers open. Some people eat the leaves, breaking off or cutting off the spiky tips, and others prefer the hearts with all the leaves removed. The flowers are used as a substitute for rennet, which means they curdle milk. As a point of interest, artichoke leaves are fed to snails, apparently improving their flavour! Yuk. I have never tried snails, and I don't think I ever will.

## Aquilegia (Aquilegia)



You will probably know this plant by its common name of Granny's Bonnet, or Columbine. This plant is in my top ten list of favourite plants. The flowers come in various shapes, sizes and colours. They are rich in nectar and are an extremely attractive addition to your salad dishes. I often pick one-off to eat when I am doing my rounds in the garden as it quenches the thirst. They are ideal as an infusion too.



## Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*)



This herb is usually grown annually. It is probably my favourite herb, and I grow numerous varieties. Compared to the leaves, the flowers have a milder flavour. It is perfectly normal for basil plants to bloom in summer and early Autumn. Pick off the flowering tops as soon as they open, sprinkle them over salad or pasta, and add them to soups and pesto. Every kitchen should have a basil plant on its windowsill!

## Begonia (Begonia cucullata)



The flower of the begonia is versatile, either alongside sweet dishes or savoury dishes equally well. Both the flowers and the leaves taste nice raw, and interestingly, the stems can be cooked like you would cook rhubarb.

## Bergamot (Monarda didyma)



Bee's Balm (or Bee Balm, according to where you live. You say tomato...) as its common name suggests, is named after its nectar, which bees love.

There are various exciting flavours in the flowers ranging from citrusy to sweet and to minty and hot: each flower colour tends to taste different.

The silvery leaves are used to add flavour to lemonade, punches, etc. You can use it to make cakes and to make tea too.

The flowers are used to treat colds, flu etc. It is also beneficial for the digestive system and to fight off menstrual cramps and nausea. I think the nickname 'Balm' was derived because it is used as a balm to treat scrapes, rashes, and stings.

As a point of interest, it was one of the beverages that American colonists adopted during the boycott of British tea.

## Borage (Borago officinalis)



Borage flowers taste mildly of cucumber and are a bright blue-purple colour, with some wild varieties being a pink colour. You can use the flowers as an addition to salads or add them to summer beverages such as Pimm's. Additionally, it is an excellent garnish both for sweet and savoury dishes, as well as for gazpachos. The greens, when cooked, can be a good substitute for spinach. Cake decorations can also be made from crystallised flowers.

## Brassicas - mustard, kale, cauliflower, broccoli



If you do not pick all your leafy brassica crops, they will flower. They have a mild brassica taste and a slight yellow colour. They taste great in salads or chopped up in stir-fries.

## Busy Lizzies (Impatiens walleriana)



The flowers have a sweet taste. You can garnish salads with them or float them in drinks. Here is an interesting fact: When the flower opens, it is a male. However, when the shell of the pollen falls, the flower turns into a female. So now you know!

## Buzz Buttons (*Acmella oleracea*)



Have you heard of Buzz Buttons? You really should try them. They give your mouth a real buzz, with a tingling effect. The more you eat, the bigger the buzz. The effect is caused by an analgesic agent called Spilanthol, which is used to numb a toothache. This effect happens whether you eat the flower raw or cooked in sauces, stir-fries, soups, and dressings. They are used in cocktails for that extra zing, and you can sprinkle them over ice creams and sorbets.

## Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)



You might know these flowers better as pot marigolds. Whilst you can eat the flowers of calendula, they do not offer much in the way of taste. However, the colours of the petals will brighten up any dish.

Sprinkle them on cupcakes and add them to cookies.

Calendula is better known for its medicinal properties. When used topically, it helps treat skin problems as a salve because it is antiviral, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, anti-fungal and astringent.

Internally, the flower helps prevent muscle cramps and can start menstrual periods whilst reducing fever.

I think the best thing to say about calendula is what isn't it used for. It is used to treat and relieve sore throats, stomach, and duodenal ulcers - even cancer. The plant has also been used to treat smallpox, measles, and jaundice. That is quite a list for this small plant!



## Camellia (Camellia japonica)



Over 250 different species of genus camellia exist, and there are over 1000 cultivars of *Camellia sinensis* known so far.

The leaves and buds of camellia plants are commonly used to make tea. Because of the amount of caffeine in it, teas made from it are more common than those made from most other flowers and herbs.

If you plan on using your Camellia mainly for tea, the flower buds are usually removed because the open blooms are not used in tea making. As a result, more of the plant's energy reaches the leaves, resulting in a stronger tea. It is edible, but people prefer the tea over the flowers because they are relatively short-lived.

## Candytuft (Iberis)



The name of this plant suggests you could make candy from it. However, the name is derived from Candia, which is the former name of Iraklion, Crete. So don't get too excited. Candytuft belongs to the Brassicaceae family (cabbage family). The purple, white and pink flowers, whilst edible, are quite bitter and are probably best used as decoration rather than for eating. But they won't do you any harm if you nibble on one.

## Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)



Carnations are flowers that are subjected to a high spray regime of pesticides due to them attracting pests, and the flowers being used in bouquets etc. However, you do not need to use pesticides on your carnations, and as such, you can use them in the same way as you would use edible roses. They have a highly perfumed aroma and a sweet, spicy flavour.

# Catmint (*Nepeta grandiflora*)



The catmint plant is irresistible to cats, as its name suggests. In cats, the plant has been known to induce euphoria. Catmint is known for its cat-friendly effects, but it isn't just for cats. Far from it in fact. The plant has edible and medicinal properties for humans.

Tea can be made from its leaves and flowers. Catmint herbal tea has a sweet scent and a mild minty flavour.

The active ingredient in catmint is nepetalactone. Herbs containing this component are irresistible to cats. In addition, nepetalactone helps reduce stress and anxiety in us humans, among other benefits.

As a consequence, catmint tea also helps to relieve tension. In addition, it has a mild sedative effect that can relieve insomnia and make you sleep better.

You can also eat the leaves. A lovely minty flavour and a mild fragrance make the young leaves an aromatic addition to salads. As a substitute for herbs in cooked dishes, older leaves can be used.

Other health benefits of this herb include reducing tension and improving sleep quality. Catmint tea can aid digestive problems such as upset stomachs, excessive gas, diarrhoea, and nausea, just like other herbal teas.

The herb is also helpful for respiratory problems such as colds, coughs, and chest congestion. Additionally, catmint is effective for relieving stomach pains and menstrual cramps.

Catmint also has a diuretic effect, which increases sweating and urination. Due to its benefits in treating fever and water retention, this herb is commonly used in traditional medicine. Furthermore, it has anti-inflammatory properties, so you can use it to treat wide-ranging problems, such as arthritis, haemorrhoids, and bug bites.

You didn't know there was so much power in this small plant, did you?

## Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)



Choose German chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), also known as M, for its daisy-like flowers. A favourite is a tea made with them that is vaguely apple-flavoured and can be made fresh or dried.

Some people like to drink several cups a day. The tea may, however, cause an adverse reaction in allergy sufferers, so be aware. Make chamomile cordial or liqueur.

Alternatively, sprinkle the petals over a salad or soup. Note: The leaves are not very nice – quite bitter, in fact.

## Chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*)



A delicate umbel of white flowers adorns the lacy leaves of this shade-loving herb. In both the leaves and flowers, there is a strong anise or liquorice flavour. Sprinkle your dish with fresh chervil just before serving. Chop up some chervil, sprinkle it over your scrambled eggs or omelettes, and top it off with some flowers.

Fresh chervil has much more flavour than the dried alternative.

The flowers and indeed the leaves of chervil can be made into a juice, or an infusion.

A point to note is that if a recipe calls for parsley and you do not have any to hand, grab the chervil instead. Problem solved.

## Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)



Chicory is a relative of dandelion and lettuce. It is also a wild variety of Belgian endive.

As summer draws to a close, all types of endive (*Cichorium endivia* & *C. intybus*) will produce sky-blue flowers. The petals can be peeled off and added to salads for a taste that is similar to endive. The buds can be pickled before opening, like capers. They can also be used to make an infusion. Although the flowers are bitter, once the tea is made from them, it becomes quite pleasant to drink. Chicory is simply chock-a-block with minerals and vitamins, and as such, it is a healthy addition to your diet.

## Chickweed (Stellaria media)



Chickweed is a weed, but I thought I would include it as the flowers can be eaten, either cooked or raw. As such, you can actually eat the whole plant including the leaves and stems. They contain vitamins A and C, and you get around the same amount of calcium that you get in dandelions.

A word of warning, though. It is similar to radium weed, and that plant is poisonous. It is easy to check, however. Radium weed will ooze a milky liquid out of the stem when squeezed.



## Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)



Chives belong to the group of edible flowers that are most versatile in savoury dishes.

There is an oniony flavour to this herb that doesn't overwhelm the taste buds. Harvest flowers as soon as they open. Growing seed heads have a stronger taste, however. In the event of frost, you should pick the flowers regularly to keep them blooming. The beautiful flowers can be used as a garnish for salads and sauces and are a great ingredient to flavour your vinegar.

## Chrysanthemum (Chrysanthemum)



In the same way as calendula, the petals add flavour and colour to creamy soups, fish chowders, and egg dishes. In addition, the flowers make a lovely tea, which helps to reduce inflammation. It is also a good source of vitamins and is said to lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

## Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*)



Clary sage is a herb that has been used for over two thousand years for medicinal purposes. It is called "clary" because the sticky seeds were used to help get small foreign objects out of the eye, to help you to see 'clearly'. In fact, it is commonly called Cleareye and Eyebright.

This plant also produces Clary oil, which is used in aromatherapy. This oil promotes relaxation and a sense of well-being. It also helps to reduce blood pressure as a result.

Young leaves are dipped in cream and fried. They can also be immersed in an egg batter and cooked into fritters.

The pleasant-flavoured flowers are used as an infusion or sprinkled on salads.

**Note:** Clary Sage is not recommended for consumption by pregnant women

## Clover (Trifolium)



The leaves and flowers, when dried, have a mild flavour of vanilla. White clover was used in the past to purify your blood.

When the blossoms were infused to make an infusion, this was used for an eyewash. You can garnish fruit and green salads with red or white clover flowers or add red clover flowers to make wine. It is also taken internally as a tincture or an infusion.

## Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*)



Coriander bolts quickly in the summer heat and will produce tall umbels of white flowers. The flowers have an intensely herbal flavour, just like the plant's leaves, roots, and seeds. Coriander can be used as a garnish for salads. As a point of interest, coriander seed is used in gin distillation.

## Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*)



This flower is also known as Bachelor's Buttons. The blue or pale pink cornflower adds a spicy taste to salads. When sprinkled over iced cakes like confetti, they look beautiful. Try mixing them into cream cheese for a bit of colour. Be sure to take off the green sepals around the flower though, as they are bitter.

Only pick as many wild cornflowers as you need. They are an essential part of the wildflower meadow ecosystem.

## Cosmos (cosmos bipinnatus)



You may recognize Cosmos by its common name: Mexican Aster. The flowers taste like nectar and have a delicate flavour.

These blooms feature vibrant orange and yellow edible flower heads, making them the perfect addition to various summer dishes. In addition, these sweet flavours of Cosmos edible flowers make them ideal for desserts and sweet drinks.

These edible flowers are perfect for decorating large celebration cakes. You can also pull off the edible flower petals. You can then sprinkle the petals on cakes, desserts, and drinks.

## Courgette (*Cucurbita pepo*), squash, marrow and pumpkin



The Italians in particular love courgette flowers. They need to be picked early in the morning when they are open. There is a mild vegetative flavour to these large yellow flowers. You can deep-fry courgette flowers in the batter. It is also possible to stuff them (with mozzarella cheese, for example) then steam them. In addition to shredding the flowers, a popular method is to soften them in oil and incorporate them into pancake or tortilla batter.



## Dahlia (Dahlia)



Dahlias are renowned for their blooms. Also, most dahlia tubers are widely eaten, although I have never tried one myself.

All dahlia flowers are edible. However, the flavours and textures can vary greatly depending on the soil and the conditions in which they have been grown. Flavours range from water chestnut to asparagus, through to a spicy apple flavour, or even carrot. You really should try them if you have some growing in your garden, to discover what your flowers taste like.

The flowers can be presented whole or scatter the petals as a decoration. Spice up green salads or use the vibrant colours of the flower on cakes and in cocktails.

## Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)



The daisy that you see on lawns etc., is an edible flower. There are known as Bellis Daisies. The leaves (when young) and the flower buds can be put to good use in salads and sandwiches. Either pickled or used in soups, they can replace capers or make wine. Pick off the petals and sprinkle them as a decoration.

## Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)



Dame's Rocket is an invasive species. At first glance it looks like Phlox. However, Dame's Rocket has four petals, whereas Phlox has five.

It offers pretty, long-lasting flowers and is trouble-free to grow.

The plant has been used in medicine to induce as a diuretic and causes sweating. In addition, the leaves are rich in vitamin C and have been used to prevent or treat scurvy.

It is cultivated and is included in wild bird seed mix because birds love the seeds. Young leaves collected before flowering are eaten like you would eat cress. As an aside, the seed pods can be added to stews and soups. Seeds are a source of oil and can be sprouted and eaten. The flowers are used to add spicy, piquant flavours to fruit dishes and salads.

## Dandelion (Taraxacum)

So much has been written and recorded about the health benefits of dandelions that I simply could not do it justice in this book. It could take up a whole book on its own. All you need to do is google 'health benefits of dandelions' to discover how to use the flowers, leaves and roots of this incredible plant.

Here is a taster: The crunchy, sweet flowers can be eaten raw. A yellow flower on this common weed tastes like honey when picked young. As it matures, it becomes bitter. You can make tea, wine, beer, and wine from the flowers. Prepare dandelion bhajis by coating open flowers with chickpea flour batter mixed with garam masala and shallow frying. Use them to garnish and brighten up your salad dishes. Bright yellow petals serve as confetti over a rice dish. Dandelions grow readily in most soils. In the early Spring, leave some blooms to provide nectar for emerging insects.

## Daylily (Hemerocallis)



The nectar-filled base of the petals of the daylily flower is crisp and juicy, not like other types of lilies.

**IMPORTANT:** Shop-bought lilies should not be eaten under any circumstances.

Every day, Hemerocallis plants produce a variety of hybrids with different coloured flowers. Darker colours usually leave a bitter aftertaste, while lighter shades are sweeter with a flavour, similar to asparagus or green beans. Salads can also be decorated with petals. You can also wait until the flowers are slightly withered, then you can use them to thicken cooked food. They are also great frozen.

## Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)



There is a distinct aniseed taste that runs throughout the plant (similar to fennel). The flowers have a slightly more robust flavour than the leaves. They are best picked and eaten fresh as they do not last long. It has recently become exceedingly popular to add the dill fronds to fish dishes such as salmon, but the flowers can be used in cakes, stuffing mixes, salads, or vinegars.

## Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)



*Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' has purple, heart-shaped leaves with pointed tips. The leaves turn yellow in autumn before falling. Pea-like flowers are produced during spring, usually in deep red, pink or white. It looks stunning planted at the back of a border or against a wall and pairs well with plants with lime-green foliage.

In a study that was published in *Economic Botany*, redbud flowers were found to contain significantly more vitamin C than most common domesticated fruits and vegetables, including oranges.

You can happily eat the young leaves raw or cooked. Pickle the flowers before they open, and add to vinegars, or use them as you would use capers in your cooking. Adding seeds and flowers to jellies and muffins is beneficial for antioxidants like linoleic and alpha-linolenic acids.

## Echinacea (Echinacea purpurea)



This plant is renowned for helping to fight off colds in the winter and is available almost everywhere in tablet form. You can dry the flowers, then use the petals to make a herbal tea, as a popular home remedy. They can be mixed with various other herbs to add extra flavour.

**Note:** Pluck the petals off the centre of the flower, which is quite spiky.

## Elderflower (Sambucus)



I think we have all heard of elderflower wine that you can make yourself. You can also get the cordial in many restaurants and bars. Elderflower Presse, for example, is a popular drink these days.

**Note:** The flowers have a mild toxic and not very pleasant taste if you eat them raw.

You can dip the flowers in batter and fry them or make wines and cordials from them. They are delicious with gooseberries or make a delightful sorbet, custard, or ice cream. Pink flowers are sometimes seen on dark-leaved elders, which keep their colour throughout the year.

Tea made from elderflowers and berries is often used to treat colds. Elderflower is a hardy shrub that grows anywhere except in waterlogged areas.



## Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*)



Many people will be aware of the Evening primrose with regard to treating menstrual and menopausal symptoms. In fact, its uses are many, from helping to clear up skin problems such as acne and eczema, reducing breast pain, and bringing down blood pressure. It is available in both oil and tablet form. The good news is that the whole plant can be eaten – root, stalk, flowers. As an aside, in Germany this plant became a common vegetable in the early 1900s. The flowers taste sweet and are used as a garnish or brighten up salads, and flower buds are eaten raw or cooked.

## Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)



Fennel has a distinct aniseed taste throughout the plant. Some describe it as a sweet licorice and citrus taste. It has recently become very popular to add fennel pollen to fish dishes by shaking the flowers over the dish, but the flowers can also be used in cakes, stuffing mixes, salads, or vinegars (similar to dill).

## Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*)



Its name gives away the medicinal benefits of this plant. It is renowned as a traditional method of relieving migraines, fevers, tummy pains, toothache, menstrual problems etc. It is well worth exploring fully online when you get the chance. It is widely available in capsules, tablets, or liquid forms.

Traditionally the flowers and the leaves were chewed and ingested for their health benefits. In addition, the dried flowers are used to make tea and used as a flavouring in some pastry recipes.

## Fire Feathers (Celosia)



Although I have never tried them, I understand that the flowers taste just like spinach, with a basil-like texture. As their name suggests, they come in beautiful hues of red, orange, yellow and purple, and as such, they look stunning on any dish. The flowers will brighten up stews, soups, seafood, fresh fruit platters and desserts. They also look great in cocktails or mocktails. Use them as stirrers – the stalks have a woody texture.

## Forget-me-not (Myosotis)



The Forget-me-not edible flowers with their vibrant blue (sometimes pink and white) and yellow blooms look beautiful when floated in drinks, placed on cakes and sprinkled on desserts. You can eat the flowers alone as a snack or use them as a garnish. However, you should not ingest them in large amounts, as they contain a mildly toxic chemical called pyrrolizidine.

## Forsythia (Forsythia)



The blossoms taste spicy, minty, and are slightly bitter. This bush is one of the first in the garden to add colour to the landscape after a long winter, and as such, it is a cheery garnish for salads. In addition, the flowers can be infused with oil as a lotion combined with witch hazel for oily skin or skin that is prone to acne.

## Freesia (Freesia)



The herb works well when infusing a tisane. (medicinal drink) with lemon juice and zest. Apparently, the flowers are excellent when infused with sugar syrup and used in sorbet as a flavouring, although I have not personally tried them. Be sure to remove all the brown and green bits plus the stamen pistils before using them, as this enhances the flavour of the petals.

# Fruit Blossom



We're talking about the blossom on fruit trees – apples, plums, cherries, citrus trees etc. Of course, these aren't eaten much, as the flower is needed for the fruit to form. But at least you know you can eat them if you want to.



# Fuchsia (Fuchsia)



Fuchsias are one of my favourite plants due to their beauty and grace, and are actually number two on my top ten list (Lavender is number one). There are over 100 species of this extraordinary plant, delighting us with incredible blooms.

There is a slightly acidic taste in the flowers. Its vibrant colours and graceful shape, however, make it perfect as a garnish. It is also possible to eat the berries. A scientific study of fuchsias discovered that the flowers contain anthocyanins, which are strong antioxidants. (However, it is not fully understood if or how they can help the human body, and further studies are being carried out).

The berries on fuchsia plants are also totally edible.

## Gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*)



Gardenia flowers are eaten raw, pickled, or preserved in honey. In addition to being edible, the fruits are also used to colour other fruits yellow.

## Garlic (*Allium sativum*)



The flowers of garlic are pink to white, with florets that can be separated and added to salads for a mild garlic flavour.

Allowing the plants to flower, however, may divert energy from the bulb. Therefore, many garlic growers prefer to cut the flower stems (scapes) before they open.

Sautéed in butter, they have an intense flavour. Run it through the food processor mixed with Parmesan cheese, olive oil, and pine nuts for a sensational pesto.

## Ginger (Zingiber officinale)



Ginger blossoms smell and taste gingery. Raw or cooked, they can be eaten. Eat the bud by cutting off the hard petals. You will want to blend the plant or chop it really finely as it is extremely hard and could be uncomfortable to swallow, but it lends a very high note to your spicy/sour base dishes that you can't get from any other ingredient.

## Gladioli (Gladiolus)



When the anthers are removed, the flowers (with the anthers removed) have a bland flavour (they taste vaguely like lettuce) but make lovely containers for spreads or mousses. You can toss individual petals in salads. You can also cook it like a daylily.

## Hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*)



The flowers make a refreshing citrus-flavoured tea enhanced with rosemary. They have a fruity taste. The flower is a source of vitamin C and is purported to be good for lowering your blood pressure.

As with many other edible flowers, they make a nice addition to your salad dishes etc.

## Gypsophilia (Gypsophilia)



Gypsophilia is more commonly referred to as Baby's Breath. As edible flowers, they have a mild, slightly sweet taste and are widely used in floral arrangements. These blooms are mainly used as garnishes.

## Hollyhock (Alcea)



Large hollyhock flowers have a substantial, glutinous texture and add colour to salads, stir-fries, or drinks. Of course, the flowers are used for decorating cakes too.

**IMPORTANT:** Remove the stamen before using the flower. It carries pollen which causes an allergy in some people.



## Honeysuckle (Lonicera)



You can eat the flowers of the honeysuckle, as they contain delicious sugars (the sugars that entice the bees to the plant). It is considered to be a safe herb for children and the elderly to consume. However, it is used in traditional Chinese medicine far more than in Western herbalism, and its uses include the soothing of spasms in the respiratory and digestive tracts. Try sucking the base of the honeysuckle flower to see if you know the taste. You can easily make a lovely, healing syrup with this flower.

## Hosta (Hosta)



Hostas are a shade loving plant, well known for their leaves. However, they flower in midsummer, and the blooms are edible (along with the stalks and leaves). Add the flowers to salads, fry them up as fritters, or simply pick and eat.

## Jasmine (Jasminum)



Jasmine tea can be made from the flowers - but you must ensure that it is the natural variety (*Jasminum officinale*) and not a false variety. The copycat types are poisonous.

Flowers on the edible variety are waxy and tubular in shape.

# Lavender (Lavandula)



Lavender flowers are my number one favourite flower, evoking memories of my childhood, when we regularly visited an elderly auntie in Norfolk whilst on holiday there each year. As we walked down her garden path to her bungalow, we would brush against the lavender on both sides of the path. She also had an outside loo which was in a corrugated iron shed, and I kept pretending I had to go, just to disturb the lavender, to release their heady scent.

I digress...

The flowers of the lavender can be used in jams, jellies, ice cream, biscuits, and vinegar. Crystallised flowers can be used in salads or made into tea. The highly scented flowers are best picked when they first open and before the seeds begin to form.

Note: After flowering, plants become woody but can be pruned back to maintain vigour.

## Lemon Verbena (*Aloysia citrodora*)



You can eat this plant's leafy young leaves like spinach. In addition, they are used to flavour fruit cups, jellies, cold drinks, salads, omelettes, salad dressings and vegetable dishes. The tiny, citrus-scented leaves are brewed into a refreshing tea. The tea made from the flowers is much sweeter than tea made from leaves.

## Lilac (Syringa)



The white or purple flowers are delicately fragrant. Different lilac plants have different flavours. All are slightly bitter and very fragrant. Lilac has a lemony taste with floral and pungent overtones. The crystallisation of egg whites and sugar makes it great in salads.

## Marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis*)



Did you know that Marshmallows (that you eat) were made from the marshmallow plant and honey at one time, possibly in the Middle Ages? (In modern times, they are made from gelatin and corn syrup.) All parts of this plant are edible, including the flowers. Marshmallows can be made from the green seed pods after bees and other insects have pollinated the flowers.

## Mint (Mentha)



Mint is an all-round popular herb that you will find in pots in most kitchen gardens. It is such a versatile herb. Both sweet and savoury dishes can benefit from apple, pineapple, ginger mint, peppermint, and spearmint flowers in vinegar and butter.



## Nasturtium (Tropaeolum)



The taste of this flower is spicy-peppery (if that is a word. However, it seems to sum it up perfectly).

This annual plant has edible petals, leaves and seed pods. Similar to cress, the leaves have a mild flavour. Throughout the summer, pick flowers for immediate use. It is possible to pickle the green seed pods and use them instead of capers. There is some confusion over this, however. The seed pods of the nasturtium are not capers. The real capers come from the caper plant.

Nasturtium buds are remarkably like capers and can be used instead of the real thing. Nasturtiums are an excellent addition to salads, pasta, meat dishes, and vinaigrettes.

## Nigella (Nigella)



You may know this plant by its delightful common name, 'love-in-a-mist'. I have included nigella in this list as the flowers are edible. However, the flowers, whilst edible, are mainly used as decoration for wedding and celebration cakes.

## Onion (*Allium fistulosum*)



Onion flowers are edible and offer an onion flavour similar to leeks or scallions, without the bite (or tears) of an onion bulb. The flowers are ideal for tossing in a salad or for mixing in with vegetables. Also, collect the blooms to infuse in vinegar or olive oil.

This applies to onions, Welsh onions, and Spring onions.

## Orchid (Orchidaceae)



There is nothing more aromatic or crisp than the smell and taste of orchids. Various flavours, such as spicy vanilla, sweet and grassy, and some hints of cucumber, are present in the flowers.

Orchids have beautiful blooms that can be used in a variety of dishes. For example, they are used in Asian stir-fries, sauces, boiled for tea, or dipped in batter and deep-fried.

Cakes and desserts can be garnished with orchids. They can also be used to decorate drinks with edible flowers and fruit platters, and cheese boards.

## Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)



Oregano edible flowers have a much more subtle flavour than the leaves. Even so, they still have a pungent, slightly spicy, yet bitter taste.

The edible flowers of oregano are usually used to garnish savoury dishes and canapés. You can toss the flowers in salads. If you want to remove the petals of the edible flowers, you can do so as well, then they can be combined with cream cheese or butter to add colour and subtle flavour. Flowers can also be placed on vegetable dishes for a delicate touch. It is also possible to use these flowers as garnishes on top of drinks. Finally, use the flowers to garnish dishes that already contain oregano.

# Osteospermum (Osteospermum)



There's a name to get your tongue around! The common name for Osteospermum is African Daisy. The flowers look similar to marigolds or daisies except bigger and are grown as an annual plant in the UK. The blooms come in a range of colours including purple, yellow, pink, mauve, and flower.

The flowers are used mainly for decorative purposes due to their vibrant colours and the variety of colours available.

## Pansy (*Viola tricolor* var. *hortensis*)



If you eat a lot of pansies, they have a mild, grassy flavour. If you eat just a little, they have a mild, lettuce-like fresh taste, with an undertone of mint.

Although the petals are very mild in flavour, the whole flower tastes a lot stronger. You can garnish cocktails, desserts, soups, and fruit salads with pansies.

Commercially grown pansies should not be eaten.

## Pea (garden variety) (*Pisum sativum*)



Young shoots and flowers can be added to salads to give them a fresh pea taste. In addition, you can serve a combination of shelled peas, pea tendrils, pea pods, and flowers as a garnish at a meal.

**Note:** The ornamental sweet pea is poisonous.



## Peony (Paeonia)



The petals of the peony can be added to salads or floated in drinks. They can also be parboiled, added to sugar, and served as a sweet treat. It is a favourite in China.

Collect the petals as and when they fall, so you retain the beautiful blooms.

## Phlox (Phlox)



Here is a point to note: we are talking about the tall perennial plant, not the low growing plant, which is toxic. It looks like Dame's Rocket, but that has four petals, whereas phlox has five petals. The flowers are used in salads, adding a spicy flavour.

## Pinks (Dianthus)



The taste of flowers is spicy and clove-like.

When first opened, they should be picked and the white base removed. Then, besides salads, fruit pies and sandwiches, they can be candied, pickled in vinegar or made into syrup.

## Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*)



(Also covers Cowslips, Primula, Polyanthus). Crystallised Primroses, Primulas. Polyanthus or Cowslips can be used to decorate cakes. You can freeze them in ice cubes. The blossoms are bland in taste but sweet. The buds can be pickled, added to a salad, or cooked as a vegetable. You can even make wine with them.

## Pumpkins (Cucurbita) and squashes



This flower is a popular choice in southern India, where the flowers are picked to make thoran. It is enjoyed along with rice. It is also popular in Bengali cooking, where it is used to make fritters or a dish called pakoda, served with green chutney.

Once the female flowers are pollinated, pick the male flowers. As with courgette flowers, use the blooms in a similar manner.

## Purslane *Portulaca oleracea*



Purslane is an edible succulent that produces tiny yellow flowers and thick, fleshy leaves. The flowers and leaves can all be eaten raw or cooked. Purslane was historically thought of as just another weed in the garden. However, recently, this little plant has gained popularity due to its high nutritional content.

It contains copious amounts of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Surprisingly though, its biggest claim to fame is its omega-3 fat content. Most vegetables of its kind do not contain as many (if any) omega-3s as purslane.

Many salads and sandwiches can be made with raw flowers and leaves of purslane. The vegetables may be sautéed or steamed with other vegetables as a side dish or added to your favourite soups. It may even be worth trying this plant battered and fried.

The good news is that you can obtain a summer variety and a winter variety, which will see you through the colder months.

## Radish (*Raphanus sativus*)



All parts of the plant, including seeds, flowers, and leaves, can be eaten raw or cooked. The flavour is peppery, like a milder version of the root vegetable. If you don't like the root, try the above-ground parts.

In recipes that use tender leaves (like spinach), you can cook the young leaves of radish instead.

Radishes have tiny prickly hairs on the leaves, especially as they age, so I would not recommend them for salads. Fortunately, the raw leaves lose their prickliness when cooked or ground. Salad recipes can incorporate flower buds and flowers, however. To prevent the blooms from wilting too quickly, keep them chilled.

## Robinia (Robinia pseudoacacia)



You many know this shrub as 'false acacia'. It doesn't flower freely, but if and when you can get them, the flowers have a pleasantly fragrant aroma which can be used in jams, desserts, or food such as pancakes. They can also be infused into a drink.



## Rose (Rosa)



Roses with rugosa petals have large, single flowers. Old roses (especially damask and gallica rose petals) are particularly delicious – and are a close second. The most fragrant hybrid rose varieties have flavourful petals, although some have an aftertaste. So be sure to taste one before you take it into the kitchen. When harvesting petals, make sure the whitish base of the petal is not damaged, as it is sour. The petals of the rose are excellent for making jam, flavour vinaigrettes, sauces, sweets or meat dishes.

## Rosemary (Salvia Rosmarinus)



It requires nimble fingers to pull the strongly scented flowers of rosemary from the leaves, which are thin and tightly packed. The leaves do contain more oil than in the flowers, but both have similar flavours. Use the flowers the same way you would use the herb. Note: The flowers range from deep blue to pink, depending on the soil.

## Rocket (*Eruca vesicaria* ssp. *Sativa*)



The flowers taste spicy, much like peppery leaves. Early in the year, it makes a lovely addition to salads.

## Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*)



The dried yellow flowers are sometimes sold as Mexican saffron and used as a food dye like saffron. You can, however, use fresh petals in salads, soups, and sauces. They have a very mild taste. Rice is often cooked with the petals.

## Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)



Mauve-blue flowers appear in midsummer on this perennial herb. Sage flowers taste milder than sage leaves. Thus, they can be used in salads, soups, pesto, and fish dishes. Some members of the sage family have especially tasty flowers as well -- *Salvia elegans* tastes like pineapple for example, while *S. gregii* is vaguely blackcurrant-like.

## Salsify (*Tragopogon porrifolius*)



Salsify is part of the daisy family. It is a biennial vegetable that tastes somewhat like oysters, with a hint of perfume. This plant was extremely popular in the 18th century. The plant grows lots of flowers which close up by the afternoon. The purple flower heads consist of florets, i.e., many small flowers that make up one big flower), are entirely edible and add a touch of beauty to any salad dish.

As for its medicinal properties, the plant has been used for digestive and liver problems and is a diuretic.

## Scarlet Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*)



This vine produces vibrant, intense red flowers that are also delicious. Their visual appeal makes them excellent garnishes for soups and salads. They also go well with devilled eggs, on a platter of antipasto, or adorning a cheese platter.

## Scented Geranium



Brush past a scented geranium, and oh, the scent... they taste like they smell and give a wonderful floral flavour to cakes, drinks, and dishes.



## Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*)



The sorrel flowers have a strong lemony flavour and can be sprinkled over salads or used as a condiment. The flavour, however, comes from oxalic acid, so those with kidney conditions or rheumatism should avoid it.

## Stock (Matthiola incana)



Common stock is a scented, attractive flower that the Elizabethans called "gillyflower". Stock flowers can be added to salads raw or as a garnish for sweet desserts. Also, they can be candied.

Their taste is perfumed, as you can tell by the scent when you brush past one in the garden. In addition, the plant's pods are edible.

## Strawberry (*Fragaria ananassa*)



It is possible to eat strawberry blossoms, although most people wait for the fruit. You can surprise your dinner guests by adding flowers to your salad. As for the leaves, they are also edible but are somewhat astringent. Concerning commercial crops, these are often sprayed with this or that chemical to keep the fruit alive and looking good until they are harvested. The pink blossoms are cultivated, and the white blossoms are wild.

## Sunflower (Helianthus)



When served with garlic butter, the whole buds should be blanched. The petals can be used in salads, stir-fries, or pasta dishes.

Cooked unopened buds taste similar to artichokes, to whom they are closely related.

## Sweet Cicely (*Myrrhis odorata*)



These flowers are similar to elderflowers, being large and white. Sweet Cicely seeds resemble miniature cucumbers and are good to eat because they are crunchy, sweet, and sour with lots of vitamins. You can cook succulent leaves and flowers in Tempura batter or add them to soups, salads, or omelettes.

## Sweet violets (*Viola odorata*)



Being one of the few edible flowers available in winter and through to early Spring, these plants have small blue or white blooms. This delicate fruit adds flavour and colour to confectionery, thickens soups and stews, and makes a delicious garnish for salads, fruit salads, and desserts. It is, however, recommended to avoid eating too much of these foods as they can have a laxative effect.

# Tulip (Tulipa)



It is said that tulips are toxic flowers that you should avoid. Let's explore this to dispel any myths. Raw or cooked, the petals are quite tasty, although they lose their colour when they are cooked. They come in many flavours ranging from bland to beans, peas, and cucumbers.

Red, yellow, and peach blossoms are the sweetest, followed by pink, peach, and white. It is more common to use them as dippers or appetiser holders. You can garnish salads with them. The pistil and stamens of the centre of the blossom should be taken off if you use the entire flower.

When using individual petals, cut off the bottom ends as well since they may be bitter.

What part of this flower is toxic, exactly? Tulip bulbs have a yellow inner core. So if you fancy tucking into a tulip bulb - before cooking and eating the rest of the bulb, that core needs to be removed. Tulips can also trigger allergies in some people, so be careful.

## Water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*)



The water lily flower (as a bud) is edible either raw or as a vegetable, and the flowers of these beautiful plants make beautiful decorations.

Here in Norfolk, the Broads are literally full of yellow waterlilies which look ripe for picking during the season.



## Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)



Interestingly, Yarrow is also known as Soldier's Woundwort. This is because the plant is renowned for treating wounds and stopping the blood flow from a wound. As you can probably tell from its Latin name, it is alleged to have been used by Achilles to stop the wounds of his soldiers from bleeding.

The main use for the Yarrow flower is as an aromatic tea.

# Zinnia (Zinnia)



Zinnia has a claim to fame. Zinnias were taken to the International Space Station as an experiment to see if they would grow in a weightless environment.

It beats me - I would have taken some carrots and lettuce personally!

The plant comes in a range of colours and shapes. The flowers, although edible, are rather bitter, so it is best to use them solely as decoration.

## Summary

I hope you have enjoyed this book and have gained some knowledge along with a few ideas regarding what flowers to use and how to use them. I began the book with a dozen or so edible flowers and quickly realised that very few resources listed all or most of them. So, it became a labour of love over many, many months. I am aware that no matter how much research I have carried out on this fascinating subject, there might be one or two that I have missed along the way - or there may be some uses for the various flowers that you know about, and which could help our readers. If so, please visit our website and be sure to leave a message on our contact page.

Thank you.

# Resources

Where to buy edible flowers online (we are not affiliated)

- <https://nurturedinnorfolk.co.uk/>
- <https://maddocksfarmorganics.co.uk/>

Eat The Planet

<https://eattheplanet.org/anise-hyssop-a-fragrant-and-nutritious-herb/>

RHS

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=764>

Marin Master

<http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/files/135971.pdf>

Gardening Know How

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/>

Garden Organic

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/>

The Fuchsia Blog

<https://www.fuchsiasinthecity.com/blog/files/eat-your-fuchsias.php>

Wild Food UK

<https://www.wildfooduk.com/>

Tree Hugger

<https://www.treehugger.com/>

Good food

<https://www.goodfood.com.au/>

Seeds of Italy

<https://seedsofitaly.com/>

Eat the weeds

<http://www.eattheweeds.com/>

Tropical permaculture

<https://www.tropicalpermaculture.com/>

Thompson-Morgan

<https://www.thompson-morgan.com/>

The Flower Deli

<https://theflowerdeli.co.uk/>

The Herbal Academy

<https://theherbalacademy.com/>

What's Cooking America

<https://whatscookingamerica.net/>

City Flowers

<https://www.cityflowers.co.in/>

Nurtured in Norfolk

<https://nurturedinnorfolk.co.uk/>

India Times

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Quora

<https://www.quora.com/>

Everything What

<https://everythingwhat.com/>

Healthline

<https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/how-chrysanthemum-tea-benefits-health>

Practical Self Reliance

<https://practicalselfreliance.com/>

The Splendid Table

<https://www.splendidtable.org/>

Very Well Fit

<https://www.verywellfit.com/>

Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine

<https://chestnutherbs.com/calendula-sunshine-incarnate-an-edible-and-medicinal-flower/>

Purslane

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3934766/>



For more recipes, tips and ideas, visit

<https://growyourownsecrets.com>