

Steven Biggs

Helping you grow food at home



Edible Flower Checklist

**30 edible flowers for home gardens:
Vegetables, herbs, common ornamental
flowers, and woody plants**

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Vegetables

We grow some vegetables for their edible flowers. Think of artichoke, broccoli, and cauliflower. But there are many other vegetables with edible flowers! *Here are a few to start with:*

- **Arugula.** I like using arugula flowers to garnish soups and salads. Small and peppery.
- **Broccoli.** If you're late harvesting broccoli, little yellow florets appear. I love these on a stir fry.
- **Fennel.** Anise flavour. Pick when small so they're tender. Or...tap pollen from larger flowers onto plates or food as decoration.
- **Pea.** The flowers taste much like peas. Don't take so many that you'll affect your crop...but you can always steal a few.
- **Runner Bean.** Tasty sweet flowers. The unopened little flower buds look like jelly beans!
- **Squash.** I like them stuffed with a wedge of cheese, battered, and deep fried.

Herbs

Many herbs have edible flowers. They usually taste much like the leaves. With flowers that have a tough central area or stem, pluck off petals or florets.

- **Basil.** Flavour is like the leaves. I usually pinch my basil plants so they don't flower...but we eat any flowers that escape pinching. Pluck the flowers from the flower spike.
- **Borage.** A heavenly blue. I like to float borage flowers in a glass of lemonade.
- **Chamomile.** Commonly used to make tea.
- **Chive.** Flowers taste like the leaves. Sprinkle on soups or dips for colour and taste.
- **Cilantro.** Lacy flowers are milder than the leaves. Cilantro often goes to flower sooner than I like...so I end up using flowers to add cilantro flavour.
- **Dill.** Commonly used to make dill pickles, but you can use the flowers as a garnish or cook with them too.

Herbs

- **Lavender.** Here's an idea: Lavender-flower ice cream...unusual but delicious.
- **Mint.** Works nicely with sweet dishes. I also like the flowers on a bowl of hummus.
- **Oregano.** Nice to sprinkle on a marinara sauce. Or put some on corn bread before baking.
- **Thyme.** Flowers are small...so might get lost in food dishes. That makes them perfect for flavouring a vinegar, where you can see them in the bottle.
- **Rosemary.** Flowers taste like the leaves, but more delicate. I like to sprinkle them on a loaf of soda bread before baking.



Ornamental Flowers

Even where there's no vegetable or herb garden, there are still lots of edible-flower options. *Here are common edible ornamental flowers to get started with:*

- **Bachelor's Button.** Blue is the most common flower colour, but there are pink and white varieties too. Petals have a sweet taste. Blue petals look stunning on a white cake icing.
- **Bee Balm (a.k.a. Monarda).** Pairs nicely with fruit...so toss flowers into a fruit salad.
- **Calendula.** Pluck off individual petals to add colour and flavour. Easy-to-grow saffron substitute for colouring rice.
- **Daylily.** I've seen an open daylily flower used as an ice cream cone! Or add unopened daylily buds to a stir fry.
- **Nasturtium.** Peppery flavour, just like the edible leaves. Great to garnish veggie trays and atop salads.

Ornamental Flowers

- **Pansy.** Mild but sweet. Because the petals are fairly big, toss them right into a salad and they won't get lost.
- **Rose.** The white portion at the bottom of the petal might be bitter. If it is, remove it. Add rose petals to flavour jams and sauces. Or, dry them for use through the winter.
- **Sunflower.** Pluck off the petals for a colourful garnish.



Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs sometimes get overlooked when planning to add edible flowers to a landscape. But there are lots of options. *Here are a few to start with:*

- **Apple.** Faint floral taste. I like the shape best when the flowers are only partially open.
- **Elderberry.** Elderflower cordial is an easy-to-make summertime treat. (Elderflower champagne is even better!)
- **Lemon.** Very sweet smell and taste! Nice for garnishing fruit salad or other desserts.
- **Lilac.** Edible and tasty! Pair nicely with vanilla ice cream.
- **Eastern Redbud.** Small flowers for colour and texture.





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Steven Biggs is a home edible-gardening expert, horticulturist, and former horticulture instructor with Durham and George Brown Colleges in Canada. He was recognized by Garden Making Magazine as one of the "green gang" making a difference in horticulture.

His specialty is incorporating edible crops into home gardens. His own yard includes a driveway garden, rooftop kitchen garden, potager garden, raised beds, cold frames, and lots of veg, fruit, and herbs dotted through the landscape. The yard is his palette. He has worked in the horticultural industry for over 25 years.

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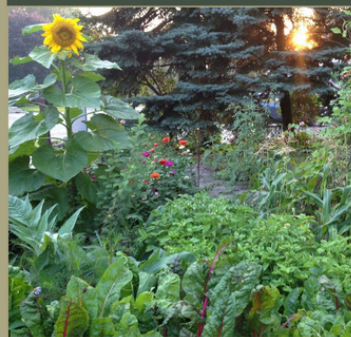
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