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A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

May 2021

EDIBLE FLOWERS ARE WORTH PLANTING IN YOUR HERB BEDS:

Green Pea Salad with Creamy Garlic Dressing

Honeysuckle and Strawberry Dessert

Hot-Packed Blueberries with Lavender

Margarita Punch

Northern Italian White Bean Salad with Fennel

**Radiator Salad with Nasturtiums, Snow peas,
and Feta**

**Spiced Pumpkin Soup with Roasted Garlic
and Chrysanthemum Petals**

This pandemic has changed our lives so dramatically. I'm sure your focus on the source of your food has changed. Foraging has become a part of our daily routine. Perhaps you have focused more on what your gardens can supply and perhaps you are planning for your gardens right now for the coming summer [or winter depending on what hemisphere you are in]. Maybe you are planning to put up a small greenhouse. Maybe you just want to add to your herb beds.

Someone once said to me that they preferred growing flowers in their gardens suggesting, I thought, that herb gardens are not beautiful. I couldn't disagree more. You can create the most beautiful herb beds using edible and medicinal plants. I know you can because I have done it.

The cuisine of the ancient Romans is often a challenge to appreciate. A fermented fish sauce like *garum* does not find acceptance today but their use of herbs and edible flowers is something to which we can relate. Daylilies, borrowed from the Chinese, were joined by mallows, roses, and violets during the decades of grand living in Ancient Rome. Many others were sampled by the Romans and became seasonal pleasures for their beauty and often for their unique flavor. Table settings and both savory and sweet dishes were enhanced by edible flowers in Victorian England. The list of safe, edible flowers grew. In the 1980s a revival of interest in edible flowers gave us many more possibilities for beautiful herb gardens, gardens that were safe for children and pets, gardens we could harvest for our dinner tables.

Amidst my herbs and in adjacent beds I have always planted flowering plants that add to the floral display. These are almost exclusively medicinal plants whose flowers may or may not be edible. My rationale is that they may not be lunch, but they could contribute to human wellness.

Under the bedroom window is a large Marshmallow plant, *Althaea officinalis*, whose mucilaginous root was often used as a vegetable by the Romans and by others in times of famine. Leaves and roots are used medicinally and the small white/lavender mallow flowers, also medicinal, are beautiful and prolific in the middle of summer reaching window sill height by the end of July.



A hybrid of *Solidago Canadensis* and *S. virgaurea* is a well-behaved, non-evasive Goldenrod. It is a favorite border choice for me. Leaves and yellow flowering tops that brighten late summer into the fall can be dried for medicinal purposes and winter arrangements.



Purple Coneflowers, *Echinacea purpurea*, and colorful *Echinacea* spp. hybrids of several colors are well-known medicinal plants which give life to a mid-summer garden.

Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*, cannot be eaten nor is it recommended for internal treatment. I like to have comfrey on hand for compresses and ointments for muscle and tendon inflammation and for bruises. Comfrey can be a garden choice if, and only if, you are vigilant. It is an invasive plant that is almost impossible to limit. It will spread and take over your bed

much like Tansy, *Tanacetum vulgare*, a medicinal plant which attracts beneficial insects, repels others, and displays the most beautiful button-like yellow flower clusters.

Lady's Mantle, *Alchemilla vulgaris*, a low growing medicinal plant used effectively in herbal medicines to regulate heavy menstrual flow and menopause symptoms, is a good choice as an edging plant. The dark green leaves and frothy yellowish-green flowers will add much to a gardenscape in the spring and through the summer.



And then, of course, there are the many varieties of Sedum.

They give my gardens "bones" and the thick leaves add real texture to salads. *Sedum spectabile* 'Autumn Joy', 'Brilliant', 'Autumn Fire', 'Neon', 'Stardust', and 'Rosenteller', an exciting light green cultivar, are still blooming when we have to cut the gardens down in preparation for the winter. Both the flowers and the leaves of the stonecrop *Sedum* are edible, albeit astringently sour. I often add a few of the tiny tender leaves to a salad as I would the leaves of *Purslane*.



Solomon's Seal is the common name of many species of *Polygonatum*. It is a large plant, perfect for use as a background planting. The soft, dramatic floral display makes it a lovely choice for your herb beds. The leaves, stems, and rhizomes are eaten raw, boiled, and fried or brewed into a tea. It has been used since 1930 to treat hyperglycemia, i. e., diabetes.

Black Cohosh, *Cimicifuga racemose*, is an attractive medicinal plant to include in the backdrop to your herbs. The tall white spikes are really beautiful. Herbal extracts of Black Cohosh are used to treat female problems because of its effectiveness in relieving muscle and nerve pain. It is also a good remedy for tinnitus and vertigo.

Feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium*, produces edible flowers that are very bitter, subdued only by a dollop of honey. Medicinally, it relieves migraines by dilating blood vessels and lowers fever. Rather than fussing with the flowers and leaves and the honey that makes them palatable, you can buy tablets containing the herb. However, its feathery leaves and tiny flowers make a nice addition to a garden display.

Blue Flag Iris, *Iris versicolor*, is a medicinal plant that lends drama to the May-June herb garden display. Medicinally, it is said to improve lymphatic circulation, function as a detoxifier, and to increase bile flow.



The bright yellow flowers and silvery-gray foliage of Cotton Lavender, *Santolina chamaecyparissus*, contrasts so beautifully when planted among green-leaved plants. *Santolina* can be used to make an infusion to treat skin irritations and insect bites which makes it a handy plant to have in your garden.



Yarrows of all colors have been included in my gardens over the years because they are an important food source for the larvae of night-pollinating moths. They are edible, albeit very bitter.

Lamb's Ear, *Stachys byzantine*, contribute soft gray leaves and pretty pink spikes to my herb beds. Not only are the fruity-tasting leaves an edible addition to a salad, its antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial properties make it a natural wound dressing. If we're stung by a bee or a wasp or by one of those dastardly hornets known as "paper wasps," I grab a lamb's ear leaf, crush it up, and apply it to the sting area . . . it works. Mullein, *Verbascum*, leaves work too.



There are many, many others from which to choose. You may want to label them as medicinal, non-edible until you learn them well.

The Romans may have had more than their share of physical complaints as they experimented with herbs and edible flowers but there is no reason we should suffer if we follow a few simple rules.

Know your plant; don't just graze through a garden. Research from reliable sources. Start with a tiny sample; any plant could be a problem to somebody, I repeat, **any plant could be a problem to somebody!** Soil, climate, and varietal will determine the flavor of a flower. You may just not like the taste.

If you have small children who are apt to graze your gardens, please **do not plant medicinal plants** among your edible herbs and edible flowers and **do dictate** to them the limits of garden munching.

Use only home-grown spray-free edible flowers.

Eat only the edible parts of plants. Do not assume that the entire plant is edible if the flowers are listed below. I find the following rule an excellent mantra: **if any part of a plant is poisonous, do not eat the flowers!**

When you buy flowers from a nursery, remember those flowers have most probably been exposed to herbicides and pesticides. **Don't harvest herbs or flowers from nursery stock.** I pinch off the flowers when I bring a plant into my gardens and I will harvest only those flowers that bloom after a period of growth in my gardens.

Do not eat flowers purchased from florists.

Never garnish a dish with a flower that can not be eaten.

Never harvest flowers growing beside roads to eat. De-icing chemicals, herbicides, and vehicle exhaust pollution make these plants noxious.

Examine flowers for insects and eggs as you would for herbs. Shake flowers to dislodge insects that may have chosen to visit the nectar just as you chose the same bloom.

Remove pistils and stamen from flowers to be served since pollen can be a problem to people with allergies.

Flowers are best consumed in moderation.

EDIBLE FLOWERS

both edible **E** and medicinal properties **M** have been included below:

Angelica, *Angelica archangelica*

E – slightly licorice flavor

N.B. can cause photosensitivity and can irritate eyes; do not use if pregnant

M – helpful in detoxifying; stimulates circulation; relieves nausea

Anise hyssop, *Agastache foeniculum*

E – anise flavor

M – antibacterial, used to alleviate coughs & colds; used as a digestive

Artichoke, *Cynara didymus*

E – an unopened flower; delicious when steamed and served with hollandaise

M – cynarin in leaves used to treat liver & gall bladder problems; lowers cholesterol

Arugula, rocket salad, *Eruca vesicaria sativa*

E – spicy, mustardy flavor

Basil, *Ocimum basilicum*

E – tastes much like the leaf from the plant on which it blooms

M – cleansing agent for infections; used for tension-caused digestive problems; antispasmodic benefiting whopping cough, asthma, migraines, and muscle pain



Bee balm, Oswego tea, red bergamot, *Monarda didyma*

E – minty, citrusy flavor; attracts pollinators

N.B. Bee balm rather successfully repels deer.

M – used to treat digestive problems

Borage, *Borago officinalis*

E – delicate, cucumber taste

M – promotes relaxation & adrenaline activity; relieves coughing and urinary infections; often given to counter the effects of steroids

Broccoli, *Brassica oleracea*

E – mild mustardy flavor of unopened flower buds

M – reduces inflammation; regulates blood sugar; positive effect on immunity; all *Brassica* have an anti-cancer reputation

Broccolini, *Brassica oleracea*

E – a hybrid of broccoli and *gai lan* – also has a mustardy flavor, but its unopened flower buds are spicier than that of broccoli

M – anti-inflammatory; all *Brassica* have anti-cancer reputation

Burnet, salad burnet, *Sanquisorba minor*

E – cucumber taste

Calendula, *Calendula officinalis*

E – tangy, peppery taste

M – antiseptic and astringent properties; stimulates the immune system; useful in reducing lymphatic congestion



Carnation, clove pink, *Dianthus caryophyllus*
E – petals are sweet
N. B. remove bitter white base of flower
M – stimulant; used to treat fevers & coronary complaints

Cattail, *Typha latifolia*
E – young flowers can be roasted; in midsummer, the yellow pollen can be added to baked goods; rhizomes are also edible

Chicory, *Cichorium intybus*
E – bitter taste, i. e., the bitter taste in coffee substitutes
M – increases appetite, promotes digestion and absorption; used for treating sluggish circulation and increase excretion of uric acid; also reduces blood sugar

Chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*
E – flowers can add intense onion flavor to vinegar
N. B. plant repels insects & moles; plant juices can be used as an insect repellent; pets risk poisoning if they consume too much
M – antifungal; used to treat intestinal parasites; promotes immunity; improves digestion; helpful in treating anemia; used since ancient times to heal wounds

Chrysanthemum, *Dendranthema grandiflorum*
E – petals have tangy to bitter taste
N. B. remove bitter white base of flower
M – increases blood flow to the heart & used to treat hypertension, headaches, dizziness; increases sensitivity to insulin; Chinese medicine uses Chrysanthemum tea for respiratory problems, hypertension, hyperthyroidism

Clover, red, *Trifolium pratense*
E – sweet, tangy, anise-like flavor
M – taken internally for eczema & psoriasis; used externally for ulcers, sores & burns; helps regulate blood sugar



Coriander, cilantro, *Coriander sativum*
E – flavor has a touch of sage, anise, and citrus
M – used for digestive problems; antibacterial; antifungal; said to lower blood sugar

Cornflower, bachelor's button, *Centaurea cyneus*
E – clove-like flavor
M – dried flowers are used to brew a tea used to treat fevers, constipation, & respiratory congestion; also, diuretic

Daisy, English, *Bellis perennis*
E – mildly bitter flavor; petals used for garnish
M – diuretic properties, useful in detoxifying and reducing swelling; often used to treat skin problems and gout



Dame's rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*
E – bitter taste; best used in salads
M – due to high content of vitamin C, flowers are used to treat & prevent scurvy; leaves can be used to induce vomiting

Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*
E – sweet, honey-like taste when young
M – detoxifying, bitter tasting leaves activate digestive juices; increases bile flow

Daylily, *Hemerocallis spp.*
E – sweet melon taste; each has a different scent; each has a different taste; dramatic garnish
N. B. Some cultivars are said to cause digestive upset. (*We have in excess of 200 cultivars on our property; I have never experienced the digestive upset suggested.*)
M – rhizomes have been used to treat jaundice, bladder infections, breast abscesses; diuretic & mild laxative properties; extract of flowers used as a blood purifier; contains anti-tumor chemicals

Dill, *Anethum graveolens*

- E – subtle anise or caraway flavor; pickling essential; dramatic, safe garnish
- M – antispasmodic & expectorant; helpful for coughs & asthma

Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*

- E – strong anise flavor; pollen has become a gourmet garnish
- M – seeds improve digestion (often chewed); used to soothe inflamed gums & as a gargle for sore throats



Forsythia, *Forsythia* sp.

- E – slightly bitter; bright garnish, nice salad addition
- M – fruit is used in medicine to treat swelling in lungs; used for severe skin rash with fevers caused by *erysipelas*; used in Chinese medicine for colds, bronchitis, & strep throat

Fuchsia, *Fuchsia x hybrid*

- E – slightly acidic; brilliant colors are good garnish choice



Garden Sorrel, *Rumex acetosa*

- E – tart, lemony flavor
- M – used to treat inflammation of nasal passages & respiratory tract; anti-bacterial; increases urine flow; used in cancer meds

Garlic chives, Chinese chives, *Allium tuberosum*

- E – garlicky, onion taste
- M – entire plant is antibacterial & a stimulant; used for cardiac & digestive problems; improves kidney functions; used to treat urinary incontinence and bladder problems

Gladiola, *Gladiolus* sp.

- E – be sure to remove stamen and pistils; perfect shape for stuffing
- M – powdered roots used for colic; used to treat colds, constipation, & diarrhea

Hawthorn, *Crataegus laevigata*

- E – scented flavor; used often in Great Britain in syllabubs and creamy desserts
- M – helps to regulate blood pressure; useful vasodilator for heart & circulatory problems, atherosclerosis, & high cholesterol

Hibiscus, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

- E – acidic, citrusy taste
- M – used to treat constipation, liver symptoms; lowers body temperature; diuretic; blood thinner; used in cancer drugs

Hollyhock, *Althea rosea*

- E – rather tasteless
- N. B. Hollyhock dolls made from bright colored flowers are dramatic garnishes.
- M – a brewed tea used to prevent & treat breathing disorders; soothes skin ulcers & cuts; detoxification tool



Honeysuckle, *Lonicera japonica*

- E – sweet honey flavor
- N. B. This is the only species that is safe to eat and only flowers are considered edible.
- M – 12 species of *Lonicera* are used for medicinal remedies.

Hyssop, *Hyssopus officinalis*

- E – bitter evergreen taste
- M – expectorant properties; antibacterial; oil used to relieve anxiety & to ease joint pain; said to enhance immunity

Impatiens, Busy Lizzie, *Impatiens walleana*

- E – sweet taste
- N.B. Foliage is favored by several butterfly species & Japanese beetles; pollen attracts bumblebees & butterflies.
- M – anti-inflammatory; antifungal (contains ingredient used in hemorrhoid med.); treatment for bee stings, insect bites, stinging nettle, and poison ivy

Jasmine, *Jasminum sambac*

E – sweet taste, similar to scent

N. B. Carolina jasmine, *Gelemium sempervierens*, is poisonous

M – *Jasminum officinale* and *J. grandiflorum* have antiseptic properties. Both are used to relieve PMS.

Lavender, *Lavandula* spp.

E – sweet flavor, almost perfume-like; very useful

N. B. The strong fragrance repels deer.

M – promotes relaxation, relieves anxiety, relaxes digestive tract; anti-bacterial; increases elimination of toxins through skin and urine; used antiseptically with skin infections, cuts, and ulcerations; repels insects and relieves insect bites



Lemon balm, *Melissa officinalis*

E – lemony, minty flavor; attracts pollinators

M – relieves palpitations; reduces blood pressure; relieves wasp & bee stings; improves sleep; anti-stress; said to be antimicrobial, antiviral, & antispasmodic too

Lemon blossoms, *Citrus limon*

E – lemony-tasting, star-shaped flowers

N. B. Lemon oil in the zest of the lemon is a poison to ward off insects. It is, however, considered safe to eat in moderation.

M – antimicrobial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory

Lemon verbena, *Aloysia triphylla*

E – the best of the lemon-tasting herbs

Lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*

E – very fragrant, lemony flavor; astringent

Marigold, *Tagetes teufolio*

E – citrusy flavor; leaves can be substituted for saffron

M – used for cuts, scrapes, & skins sores

Mint, *Mentha*, spp.

E – mint flavors vary with species and cultivars

N. B. Allergic reactions have been experienced with excess.

M – oil used as decongestant, antiseptic, mild anesthesia; often used as an inhalant; insect repellent properties – repels ants



Mustard, *Brassica* spp.

E – spicy

M – seeds used for a digestive tonic; poultices used to relieve internal inflammation



Nasturtium, *Tropaelum majus*

E – peppery flavor

M – antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic; high vitamin C content makes this plant respected as a natural treatment for colds & flu; expectorant

Onion, wild onion, nodding onion, *Allium cernuum*

E – good onion flavor extends to flower

M – antioxidants, anti-inflammatory; reduces cholesterol & triglycerides; may lower blood pressure

Okra, *Abelmoschus aesculentus*

E – flowers are sweet and mucilaginous like the rest of the plant

M – used for urinary problems including gonorrhea & syphilis; juice used to reduce skin itchiness

Orange blossoms, *Citrus sinensis*

E – star-shaped flowers have a citrusy flavor

M – anti-inflammatory; lowers reaction to pain such as menstrual cramps; encourages sleep

Oregano, *Origanum vulgare*

E – a very hearty perennial; light minty fragrance

N. B. Greek oregano, *Oregano heracleoticum*, has a stronger flavor than common oregano.

M – Infusions of seeds are taken for urinary and upper respiratory infections due to antiseptic & antibacterial properties.

Pansy, *Viola x Wittrockiana*

and Viola, Johnny-jump-up *Viola tricolor*

E – colorful salad addition or garnish; little flavor

M – antioxidant used for asthma, epilepsy, & skin diseases; antibacterial, antifungal



Pea, green pea, *Pisum sativum*

E – floral, pea-like taste

N.B. This is not sweet pea, which is poisonous.

M – contraceptive, spermicidal; a poultice is said to help acne

Pineapple guava, *Feijoa sellowiana*

E – pretty flower and very flavorful

M – helps regulate blood sugar levels; used externally to treat insect bites, & rashes, and internally to treat inflammatory bowel disease

Pineapple sage, *Salvia elegans*

E – sweet, fruity, minty taste; beautiful garnish over ice cream

M – used as a brain tonic and for stress; used to treat anxiety, depression; helps lower blood pressure; antibacterial; antioxidant



Primrose, *Primula vulgaris*

E – rather bland flavor

M – treatment for atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, & ichthyosis; helpful in diabetes to deal with nerve damage; reduces PMS symptoms & breast pain

Pumpkin, *Cucurbita moschata Duchesne*

E – slightly sweet taste

M – treatment for colds & male infertility; boosts immunity

Radish, *Raphanus sativus*

E – spicy taste

M – roots stimulate appetite & digestion; seeds are diuretic; expectorant; laxative

Redbud blossoms, *Cercis Canadensis*

E – tart, apple taste

M – infusion of bark used as a cough suppressant and to treat colds & flu; astringent

Roman Chamomile, *Anthemis nobilis*

E – dry petals for restorative tea

N. B. contains thujone and can aggravate allergies

M – relaxant for both nervous and digestive systems; relieves teething pain and colic; relieves migraine pain

Rose, *Rosa* spp.

E – sweet flavor with fruity aftertaste; can be successfully dried for winter use

N. B. Florist and grocery store roses have been sprayed.

M – leaves & petals used in tea to reduce fevers & inflammation; calms nerves; relieves cold & flu symptoms; diuretic effect

Rose of Sharon, *Hibiscus syriacus*

E – flowers have mild sweetness

N. B. Flowers attract Japanese beetles.

M – ophthalmic, styptic; leaves are diuretic and exorant; used to treat itching & skin diseases



Roselle, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*

E – citrusy flavor

M – antiseptic, purgative, astringent, diuretic; used to treat hypertension, scurvy, neurosis, & hangovers

Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*

E – Flowers have mild, less assertive rosemary taste.

M – antiseptic, antibacterial, & antifungal; boosts immunity; stimulates blood flow to brain; aids digestion of fats; powerful antioxidant

Runner bean, *Phaseolus coccineus*

E – flower colors vary with variety but flavor is decidedly that of the bean

M – diuretic, antioxidant properties; regulates blood pressure; prepared as a tea, it can be used to treat infections of the urinary tract



Safflower, *Carthamus tinctorius*

E – bitter flavor

M – oil used to treat cholesterol, diabetes, & stroke with controversial results; said to prevent heart disease

Sage, *Salvia officinalis*

E – flowers have the distinctively sage flavor but are quite light and pleasant

N.B. should not be taken during pregnancy

M – highly antiseptic with both antibacterial & antifungal properties; antioxidant; appetite stimulant; tea used for colds, fevers, & sore throats

Squash blossom, *Curbita pepo*

E – perfect for stuffing

M – antioxidant, digestive

Sunflower, *Helianthus annuus*

E – petals have bittersweet flavor; flower buds can be eaten just like artichokes

M – used successfully to treat pulmonary complaints; tea brewed to treat malaria

Sweet Marjoram, *Origanum majorana*

E – light, minty taste

M – antiseptic properties; said to relieve nervous anxiety, insomnia, tension headaches, & bronchial complaints; helpful for painful menstruation



Sweet Woodruff, *Galium odoratum*

E – sweet flavor

M – used to treat agitation, hysteria, & insomnia; used for heart lung, stomach, liver, gallbladder, & urinary problems; anti-inflammatory, diuretic

Thistle, Scotch, *Onipordum acanthium*

E – flower receptacles can be used in place of artichoke hearts

Thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*

E – mild thyme taste

M – powerful antiseptic, antibacterial properties, boosts immune system; warming properties; strong component thymol is very useful medicinally

Tuberous begonia, *Begonia x tuberhybrida*

E – sour citrus taste

N. B. If you are a gout sufferer, note that this plant is high in oxalic acid.

M – syrups & infusions for colds & gastric ulcers; reduces fever; used to treat syphilis

Violet, *Viola odorata*

E – little flavor but fragrant

M – anti-inflammatory, expectorant, and diuretic properties; infusions & lotions used to treat skin irritation and swelling; steeped for a tea for coughs & arthritis, cooled tea is used as gargle for mouth & throat infections

Winter savory, *Satureja montana*
E – spicy flavor

Yarrow, *Yarrow millefolium*

E – very bitter flower used as an herbal tea by certain Native American tribes

N. B. Deer do not like the feathery foliage.

M – Yarrow plant is important in Native American traditional medicine because they are purported to be diaphoretic and astringent; used for fever reduction, as a tonic, & for pain relief

Yucca, *Yucca* spp.

E – sweet flavor

M – effective treatment for osteoarthritis, hypertension, migraines, colitis; positive effect on cholesterol & diabetes



NOT RECOMMENDED but often listed as edible:

Apple blossoms, *Malus* spp.

– N.B. Although the blossoms have a sweet, floral flavor, they may contain cyanide precursors.

Elderberry, *Sambucus Canadensis* and *S. caserulea*

– N.B. Although the nectar gives the flowers a sweet taste, all other parts of the plant can be toxic.

Linden, basswood, *Tilia* spp.

– N. B. Heart damage can result if consumed in quantity.

Petunia, *Petunia* spp.

– N. B. Petunia is a member of the nightshade family; flowers are not safe to ingest. They are often used as garnishes in restaurants. DO NO EAT.

Queen Anne's Lace, *Daucus carota*

– N.B. can be too easily confused with poisonous wild hemlock

Scented geranium, *Pelargonium* spp.

– N. B. Some varieties are edible, others are not. Unless you are sure of your species and variety, this flower is better avoided.

Snapdragon, *Antirrhinum major*

– just too bitter to enjoy but can be used safely for garnish

Tulip, *Tulipa* asp.

– N.B. Contact with both petals and bulbs can initiate allergic reactions; ingestion can cause vomiting and sweating in sensitive individuals

The medicinal uses of plants mentioned above should not be taken as an endorsement for their use. I have presented this information to help you should you see the name in a medicine or in an herbal remedy and to demonstrate that plants are viewed as food but they can also be viewed as contributing to overall body wellness. These flowers have been included because they can contribute to the floral display. I use these plants in the beds adjacent to my herb beds, including only edible flowering plants in the beds. I reiterate, be especially careful when planting medicinal plants if small children may be foraging in your herb beds .

GREEN PEA SALAD WITH CREAMY GARLIC DRESSING

TPT - 13 minutes

In the whole of my life I've only met two people who didn't appreciate the lovely sweetness of that green legume, a small boy who pushed a serving around from dinnertime until bedtime and a college boy whose family favored canned peas. A handful of fresh or frozen peas added to a salad have, for years, been a pleasure of ours. A whole salad of peas is more than just a pleasure. There is no need to cook the peas. This way they taste almost fresh-from-the-pod; you would never know that they came from the grocery store freezer.

Equal amounts of yogurt and mayonnaise have been a tool of mine to increase dairy protein and lower fat. Here, subtly, the combination gives this salad a pleasant, contrasting tang and contributes complementary amino acids to supply the amino acid deficiencies found in the legumes.

CREAMY GARLIC DRESS:

1 small garlic clove
Pinch salt

1 1/2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 tablespoons plain yogurt or fat-free sour cream
1 tablespoon calorie-reduced or light mayonnaise
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard with wine
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1/2 cup frozen green peas—defrosted
20 snowpeas—well-rinsed, strings removed, and thinly sliced on the bias
1 tablespoon slivered, well-rinsed, fresh mint leaves

Several home-grown, spray-free pansies, for garnish*

On a bread board, chop garlic clove quite finely. Sprinkle with salt. Continue chopping until the mixture forms a paste. Turn into a small bowl.

Add lemon juice. Combine well.

Add yogurt, mayonnaise, mustard, oil, and pepper. Stir to mix well. Turn into a small, shallow serving bowl. Spread across the bottom evenly.

Scatter defrosted green peas over. Scatter snowpea slices over. Scatter slivers of mint over. Do not mix. Garnish with pansies.*

Serve at once. Scoop up dressing with peas as you serve.



Yields 4 servings

Notes: *If desired, this can be garnished with crumbled, crisp-fried soy bacon. It is a very complimentary garnish and adds just a bit more protein.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.0 g.; FAT = 4.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 4.6 g.;
CALORIES = 56; CALORIES FROM FAT = 66%

HONEYSUCKLE AND STRAWBERRY DESSERT

TPT - 10 minutes

When the local strawberries come to market in central Pennsylvania, the air is also perfumed by the utterly intoxicating scent of wild honeysuckle. The plant that winds itself up into the roof lattice of our arbor explodes with white flowers, tinged with pink and containing precious drops of nectar that makes this dessert a very special June treat.

1 cup loosely-packed home-grown, spray-free honeysuckle blossoms from which the pistils and stamens have been removed—use only those from *Lonicera japonica* (wild honeysuckle)*

1 cup chopped fresh strawberries

1 tablespoon wildflower honey

3 drops *Fiora di Sicilia***

1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

In the workbowl of the food processor, combine honeysuckle blossoms, chopped strawberries, honey, and *Fiora di Sicilia*. Process until a very smooth purée forms.



Using the electric mixer fitted with *chilled* beaters or by hand using a *chilled* wire whisk, beat heavy cream in a *clean, chilled* bowl until stiff peaks form.

Pour honeysuckle–strawberry mixture into whipped cream. Using a wire whisk, *gently*, but *thoroughly*, combine. Turn into two individual sherbet glasses and refrigerate until required.

Yields 2 individual servings

Notes: ***Know your source since some honeysuckle flowers are not edible.** Do not rinse honeysuckle blossoms. The nectar, which gives this dessert its most unusual flavor, will be lost.

*****Fiora di Sicilia*** is a citrus oil-infused vanilla extract, available in Italian food specialty stores and from a very few mail order firms. It is worth seeking out! You may wish to reduce the amount of vanilla extract when using "*Flower of Sicily*." If, however, you cannot find the original, an acceptable substitute can be created using 3 parts orange flower water to 1 part pure vanilla extract.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.8 g.; FAT = 19.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 15.0 g.;
CALORIES = 242; CALORIES FROM FAT = 74%

The food values above are approximate since accurate values for honeysuckle blossoms were unavailable.

HOT-PACKED BLUEBERRIES WITH LAVENDER

TPT - 25 hours and 45 minutes;

1 hour = lavender infusion period;

24 hours = cooling period

We use the lavender from our herb gardens in so many ways. Blueberries canned this way are delicious but the ephemeral flavor of lavender in this version makes it a favorite just as a dessert with cream or as a sauce.

2 tablespoons dried, home-grown, spray-free lavender flowers

2 quarts firm blueberries—sorted, well-washed, and stemmed

1 cup sugar



Sterilize nine 1/2-pint canning jars. Also sterilize lids and rings for jars.

Lay out a six-inch-square piece of carefully-trimmed cheesecloth and pour the dried lavender flowers into the center of it. Prepare a sachet by gathering up the corners and tying them together with a piece of washed string.

In a kettle set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, combine the lavender sachet, blueberries, and sugar. Cover and allow to come to the boil. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Remove from heat, cover, and allow the lavender to infuse into the blueberries for 1 hour. Stir occasionally.

Return kettle to *MEDIUM* heat and bring again to the boil.

Remove and discard sachet.

Ladle blueberries into the hot, sterilized 1/2-pint canning jars. Carefully wipe lips of jars. Seal with hot, sterilized lids and rings. Process in hot-water-bath canner for 10 minutes, *timing from the moment the water reaches a full rolling boil*. Remove to surface covered with thick towels or newspapers. Allow to cool for 24 hours *undisturbed*. Check to be sure jars are sealed before labeling and storing in a dark, cool, dry place.* Loosen or remove rings before storing.

Yields nine 1/2-pint jarfuls

Note: *Any jars that do not seal can be stored in the refrigerator for about one month or resealed using a *new lid*.

1/18 SERVING (i. e., per 1/2 cupful) –
PROTEIN = 0.4 g; FAT = 0.7 g; CARBOHYDRATE = 43.9 g;
CALORIES = 173; CALORIES FROM FAT = 4%

MARGARITA PUNCH

TPT - 14 minutes

I think this is probably one of the most unusual and refreshing punch combinations we've ever encountered. If you prefer not to rim the glasses with sugar, margarita-style, the punch is just as good and daisies take care of the margarita or "marguerite" reference.



Granulated sugar

8 ounces orange juice

5 ounces unsweetened grapefruit juice

Juice of 2 fresh limes

1 tablespoon sugar

2 cups bottled sparkling water or mineral water
*—well-chilled**

Lime and orange slices, for garnish

Home-grown, spray-free daisy blossoms—stems removed
—for garnish

Ice cubes

Prepare glasses well in advance of serving by moistening the rims and dipping them into the granulated sugar. Allow to dry *thoroughly* so that the *sugar hardens*.

In a pitcher, combine orange, grapefruit, and lime juices, and sugar. Stir to combine well. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Pour *well-chilled* juice mixture into a punch bowl. Stir in sparkling water. Garnish with lime and orange slices. Float daisies.

Ladle punch over ice cubes into sugar-rimmed glasses. Hang a slice of fruit on the edge of the glass, to garnish.

Yields four 8-ounce servings

Notes: *BEWARE; many sparkling waters and club sodas contain added sulfiting agents.

This recipe is easily doubled or tripled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.9 g.; FAT = 0.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 18.9 g.;
CALORIES = 74; CALORIES FROM FAT = 2%

NORTHERN ITALIAN WHITE BEAN SALAD WITH FENNEL

Insalata di Cannellini con Finocchio

TPT - 8 hours and 40 minutes;
8 hours = marination period;
30 minutes = marinade draining period

We were relieved to find salads and pasta dishes with cannellini beans on lunch menus when we visited Tuscany since less thought is given to vegetarians in Italian restaurants. They seem to presume that you will be happy with pasta, cheese, and bread; we were, but not for every meal. Our hotel restaurant in Florence offered “pasta di pomodoro” for non-meat/fish eaters every night of our stay for the same price as the meat and fish entrees. Finocchio was traditionally found at the Southern Italian table; it is now increasingly featured in very interesting dishes in the North, as in this salad.



Although you can enjoy this salad without the borage flowers, if you wait until your borage is in bloom, you will enjoy it even more. The exquisite and delicious star-shaped, blue flowers of the annual Borage plant (Borago officinalis) are an off-beat garnish for this dish. Flowers add a sweet cucumber taste to salads and may also be candied; young leaves, from which the prickly spines have been scraped, although they contain high concentrations of pyrrolizidine alkaloids, are eaten by some—raw, steamed, or sautéed. Grow from seed since the deep tap root makes this plant a poor transplant candidate. Borage self-seeds freely, if allowed to go to seed, and will appear the next spring with its attractive deep gray-green foliage.

- 1 tablespoon *extra virgin* olive oil
- 1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar *or* white wine vinegar, if preferred
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove—*very finely* chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1 1/4 cups canned white *cannellini* beans—*well-drained* *or* cooked dry beans, if preferred*
- About 2 ounces fennel—stalks and leaves trimmed, tough outer layer removed—sliced crosswise into thin slices to yield about 1/2 cup
- 2 tablespoons *finely* chopped Italian red onion
- 1 tablespoon *finely* chopped Italian flat-leafed parsley



Verona radicchio leaves—well-washed and dried—for garnish**

Fennel fronds, for garnish

Home-grown, spray-free Borage flowers—for garnish

In a cruet, prepare a *vinaigrette* by combining olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, *very finely* chopped garlic, and black pepper. Shake vigorously.

Turn *well-drained* white beans into a plastic container with a tightly fitting lid. Add fennel slices and *finely* chopped red onion and parsley. Pour prepared *vinaigrette* over vegetable mixture. Turn the container gently to coat the beans thoroughly with the marinade. Refrigerate for at least 8 hours, or overnight. Turn the container occasionally to insure even marination.

Turn the white bean–fennel mixture and the marinade into a fine sieve set over the sink and allow the marinade to drain from the beans for at least 30 minutes.

Turn drained vegetables into the center of a large shallow *pasta* bowl or other serving bowl of choice. Tuck *radicchio* leaves around the sides.

Refrigerate until required. Garnish with fennel fronds and *Borage* flowers before serving.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *Because canned white beans have been used in this recipe, no salt has been added to the *vinaigrette*. If you choose to soak and cook dry beans, you may wish to add salt.

**There are far more varieties of *radicchio* (Italian chicory) used in Tuscan cooking than we tend to find available in our markets, where tightly-leafed dark red heads of *Verona radicchio* are usually the only representative. *Treviso radicchio* is a milder variety with elongated leaves, looking rather like a large, blushing Belgian endive. The newly introduced *Castelfranco radicchio* is yellowish-green with red markings.

This recipe may be doubled, when required.

Leftovers are wonderful as is or when combined with an equal measure of cooked and chilled *pasta*. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese. Northern Italian white bean salad with fennel and *pasta* (*Insalata di Cannellini con Finocchio e Pasta*) is a meal in itself.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 3.6 g.; FAT = 3.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 12.9 g.;
CALORIES = 96; CALORIES FROM FAT = 29%



RADIATORE SALAD WITH NASTURTIUMS, SNOWPEAS, AND FETA

TPT - 48 minutes;
30 minutes = *pasta* chilling period

Radiatore are fun even without flowers but the peppery delight of the nasturtium leaves and flowers and the sparkle of the flower vinegar turn fun into a veritable circus! Our grandson even noticed . . . “What’s in here, Grandma? It’s good.”



- 2 quarts boiling water**
- 4 ounces radiatore macaroni**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- 3-inch piece of lemon zest**

- 1/2 cup snowpeas—well-rinsed and trimmed**

- 1 1/2 tablespoons calorie-reduced or light mayonnaise**
- 2 teaspoons MIXED FLOWER VINEGAR WITH OREGANO* or herb vinegar of choice**

- 2 tablespoons home-grown, spray-free nasturtium leaves—well-rinsed and dried**
- 2 tablespoons home-grown, spray-free nasturtium flower petals**
- 1/3 cup grape tomatoes halves**
- 1 1/2 tablespoons finely chopped purple basil, such as ‘Purple Ruffles’**
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**

- 1 cup bite-sized pieces red lettuce**

- 2 tablespoons crumbled, herbed, feta cheese**

- Home-grown, spray-free nasturtium flowers, for garnish****



In a large kettle set over *HIGH* heat, add lemon juice and lemon zest to the *boiling* water. Add *radiatore* and cook, stirring occasionally, according to package directions. Add snowpeas to the cooking *pasta* for the last 1 minute. Drain thoroughly, discarding lemon zest. Rinse in *cold* water. Drain again thoroughly. Chill in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small mixing bowl, combine mayonnaise and vinegar. Mix thoroughly and refrigerate until required.

When ready to assemble, turn chilled *radiatore* and snowpeas into a large mixing bowl. Add nasturtium leaves, the 2 tablespoonfuls nasturtium petals, grape tomatoes, and *finely* chopped basil. Toss gently to mix.

Add prepared vinegar–mayonnaise dressing. Toss gently to coat evenly.

In a shallow serving bowl or platter, make a bed of the red lettuce. Mound the salad in the center of the lettuce. Scatter *feta* cheese over.

Serve at once, garnished with remaining nasturtium blossoms.**

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *MIXED FLOWER VINEGAR WITH OREGANO is a delightful product of the herb garden adventure. A recipe can be found in *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul, vol. II*, p. 679.

**Remove pistils, stamen, and sepals of flowers before serving.

This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 5.5 g.; FAT = 6.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.9 g.;
CALORIES = 179; CALORIES FROM FAT = 31%



SPICED PUMPKIN SOUP WITH ROASTED GARLIC AND CHRYSANTHEMUM PETALS

TPT - 2 hours and 5 minutes;
1 hour = garlic roasting period

If you love garlic, you'll love this smooth, rich, full-bodied soup with the extraordinary taste of roasted garlic. It is beautifully accompanied by a hearty whole grain bread and fresh figs.



1 garlic bulb (whole bulb or head)
Olive oil

1 tablespoon butter
1/2 medium onion—chopped
1/2 cinnamon stick
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice

2 cups vegetarian stock of choice
1 cup canned pumpkin—unseasoned and unsweetened

Home-grown, spray-free Chrysanthemum petals
—well-rinsed—for garnish**

Preheat oven to 275 degrees F.

Slice the top one-quarter off the garlic bulb. Place garlic bulb in a **terra cotta garlic baker**. Sprinkle a few drops of olive oil over garlic bulb. Cover terra cotta baker. Bake in preheated 275-degree F. oven for about 1 hour, or until the garlic cloves are soft.

Allow garlic to cool enough to handle. Place garlic cloves on a plate and, using the handles of two table knives, squeeze the soft pulp from the garlic cloves. Scrape up garlic pulp and set aside until required.

In a kettle set over *MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add chopped onion. Sauté until onion is soft and translucent, *being careful not to allow onion to brown*.

Add cinnamon stick with ground coriander and allspice. Cook, stirring constantly, for a minute or two.

Increase heat to *MEDIUM-HIGH*. Add stock, pumpkin purée, and roasted garlic. Bring the soup to the boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to *LOW-MEDIUM* and cook, stirring frequently, for about 20 minutes. Remove and discard cinnamon stick.

Using the food processor fitted with steel knife or the electric blender, purée soup in several batches until *very smooth*. Return puréed soup to a clean saucepan set over *LOW* heat. Allow to gently reheat, thinning, if necessary, with additional stock.

Turn into a heated tureen and serve into heated soup plates. Garnish each serving with Chrysanthemum petals.*

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *Yellow and coppery-colored Chrysanthemum blossoms are most complimentary. Although edible, chrysanthemums have a bitter taste. It is, we feel, an acquired taste, so you may want to use whole flowers as a decorative garnish only.

This recipe may be doubled, when required.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.3 g.; FAT = 3.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 8.8 g.;
CALORIES = 64; CALORIES FROM FAT = 42%



*In the world in which we find ourselves today,
being able to visit our own gardens for flavor, nutrition, and beauty is comforting.*

The joy we feel in comfort is a very special human sensation.

*Drop by next month when I'll share some of my family's comfort foods
with you and your family.*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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