

Cultivated Edible Plants

Common Name

Botanical Name

Agastache (Anise Hyssop)

Agastache barberi, *A. anisata*

- Leaves and flowers have delicate anise flavor and fragrance. They may be added to salads or to make tea. (*A. barberi* is particularly flavorful.)
- Young shoots may be cooked like asparagus

Astilbe

Astilbe spp.

- Young leaves and flowers are edible

Bee Balm (Monarda, Bergamot)

Monarda spp.

- Leaves and flowers have a spicy peppery flavor

Begonia

Begonia x tuberhybrida

- Brightly colored flowers have a light lemon taste
- All aerial plant parts may be eaten

Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta

- The flower petals have a pungent flavor

Borage (Starflower)

Borago officinalis

- Flowers add a brilliant blue accent to dishes. Petals have a cucumber taste while stamens add a hint of sweetness.
- Leaves are considered medicinal
- Seeds are edible with a high gamma linoleic acid content

Burnet

Sanquisorba minor

- The delicate flowers are edible
- The scalloped compound leaves add a wonderful texture to salads

Calendula (Pot Marigold)

Calendula officinalis

- Flower petals taste like poor mans' saffron; spicy and tangy. Adds a golden hue to foods
- Greens of uncultivated varieties are considered medicinal

Campanula

Campanula spp.

- There are over 500 species, each with its own flavor. *Campanula rotundifolia* is the specie that grows wild along the front range.
- Flowers and leaves are edible

Carnation

Dianthus caryophyllus

- Flower petals taste spicy and clove-like. Best to remove the white heel from the petal base as this is bitter
- Leaves and stems may be added to salads

Chamomile**Chamaemelum nobile**

- Flower and leaves have a faint apple flavor
- This variety is different from Wild Chamomile or Mayweed

Chrysanthemum**Chrysanthemum coronarium****(Garland Chrysanthemum)**

- Flower petals are slightly bitter, pungent. They make great petal chips when fried lightly in oil.
- Greens (Stems and leaves) are wonderful in stir fry

Clover**Trifolium spp.**

- All aerial parts are delicious in salads

Cockscomb**Celosia spp.**

- Member of the Amaranth (Amaranthaceae) family and offers wonderful greens and large flower heads.
 - Greens may be eaten raw or prepared as spinach
 - Flower heads may be breaded and fried or separated and added to salads for color
- Uncultivated species are used in West Africa as a primary leafy vegetable

Cornflower (Bachelor Button)**Centaurea cynaus**

- Flowers have a spicy clove-like flavor
- New shoots are edible
- Teas/washes from flowers are antioxidant, antibacterial, and astringent

Cosmos**Cosmos spp.**

- Offers a wide range of colors
- All aerial parts (new shoots, leaves, flowers) are edible and nutritious
- *C. bipinnatus* is a specie that has naturalized through much of North America

Dahlias**Dahlia spp.**

- Both the flower petals and bulb is edible raw or cooked
- Heirloom varieties like the Yellow Gem are more flavorful and nutritious than newly created hybrids

Daisy**Bellis perennis**

- Remove flower petals to garnish soups, desserts, or salads

Daylily**Hemerocallis spp.**

- Flower petals are wonderful cold in salads, hot in stir fries, or stuffed and sautéed. Buds are also good sautéed.

Dianthus (Sweet William)**Dianthus spp.**

- Flower petals taste spicy and clove-like. Best to remove the white heel from the petal base as this is bitter
- Leaves and stems may be added to salads

Evening Primrose**Oenothera spp.**

- The wild Evening Primrose are *O. villosa*, *O. elata*
- Flower buds, flowers, leaves, new shoots, and roots of first year plant are edible and wonderfully mild
- Seeds contain high amounts of gamma linoleic acid

Filipendula (Meadowsweet)**Filipendula ulmaria**

- Young leaves are eaten raw, mature leaves added to stews
- The flower heads contain salicylic acid (aspirin) along with other constituents that protect the stomach lining while delivering pain relief.
- The root is used medicinally to balance stomach acids and calm heartburn
- The flowers, stems, and leaves are wonderfully aromatic lasting for several months

Forget-me-not violet**Myosotis scorpioides**

- The delicate star flowers are edible

Forsythia**Forsythia spp.**

- Both the spring flowers and young leaf growth are edible

Gardenia**Gardenia jasminoides**

- Flower pedals have a delicate mild flavor

Fuchsia**Fuchsia x hybrida**

- Flower petals add color to any dish
- The berries may be used for jam or jelly

Gladiolus**Gladiolus spp.**

- Flower petals have a mild, lettuce-like flavor

Hens & Chickens**Sempervivum tectorum**

- The new shoots and chubby leaves are edible raw or juiced
- It contains the same healing properties as Aloe vera

Hibiscus (including Rose of Sharon) Hibiscus rosasinensis

- Steep hibiscus petals to make a mildly citrus-flavored tea. May taste a bit acidic if used raw
- Leaves may be eaten, but tend to be astringent

Hollyhock**Alcea rosea**

- Flowers petals have a very mild flavor and add flair to any dish
- The entire plant is edible, roots, stem, leaves, and flowers
- Because its phytonutrients are destroyed by heat and alcohol, eat raw or prepare cold-infused teas.
- Leaves make a healing external skin poultice, as well.

Honeysuckle**Lonicera japonica**

- Flowers are very sweet as the name suggests

Hosta**H. montana or sieboldii**

- While all hosta are edible, the two species mentioned are known for having tasty greens and young shoots
- In Japan, hosta are listed in the vegetable section of catalogs

Impatiens**Impatiens spp.**

- The flower petals have a very mild flavor
- While the leaves of some species are edible, there are those that are toxic. It is best to eat only the flowers unless you have verified the specie.

Liatris (Gayfeather)**Liatris spicata**

- The root and tuber may be roasted or boiled like a potato

Lilac**Syringa vulgaris**

- The flowers make a lemony, pungent, floral tea

Marigold**Tagetes tenuifolia**

- Considered a substitute for saffron
- Flower petals have a citrus flavor

Nasturtium**Tropaeolum majus**

- All aerial parts (leaves, stems, flowers) are edible with a sweet yet peppery flavor

Orchid**Orchis spp.**

- Although they are almost too beautiful to eat, they are delicious

Oxeye Daisy**Leucanthemum vulgare**

- Flower petals have mild flavor
- Early spring greens (before blooms stems form) are one of my personal favorites

Pachysandra**Pachysandra terminalis**

- Only the berries are edible

Pansy**Viola x wittrockiana**

- All aerial parts (leaves, stems, flowers) are edible with a mild sweet to tart flavor

Peony**Paeonia spp.**

- Flower petals are edible

Petunias**Petunia spp.**

- Flower petals are edible

Rose**Rosa rugosa**

- Rose petals may be eaten raw or used to create scented oil
- Leaves may be used for tea
- Hips may be eaten for Vitamin C
- Seeds may be dried and ground to flour

Sedum (Stone Crop, Autumn Joy) Sedum spp.

- There are ~600 species of Sedum
- All parts of most sedum are edible
- Sedum is also better than grass on roof tops. Both Nintendo and Rolls-Royce roofs are covered with stone crop.

Scabiosa Scabiosa columbaria

- Flower petals and young leaves are edible.
- Leaves may be eaten raw or cooked as a vegetable

Squash Winter & Summer

- Flowers are fabulous dipped in batter and fried

Sweet Allysum Lobularia maritima

- Both leaves and flowers have a flavor similar to broccoli

Sweet Woodruff Galium spp
(Bedstraw, Stickyweed)

- Many native and cultivated varieties throughout the world
- Both leaves and flowers are edible

Tulips Tulipa spp.

- Flower petals are mild tasting
- Note that the center of the tulip bulb is toxic

Verbena (Lemon Verbena) Aloysia triphylla

- Flower makes a lemony tea

Viola (Johnny-Jump-Up) Viola tricolor

- All aerial parts are edible and mild tasting

Violets Viola spp.

- All aerial parts are edible and mild tasting

Zinnia Zinnia spp.

- Flower petals may be used as garnish or in teas and lemonade
- The entire flower may be fried for a nutty flavor

Harvesting Tips:

It is important to find plants that have not been sprayed with chemicals, or to grow your own from seed.

In selecting particular species of plants, try to get heirloom varieties that have not been hybridized for color. The breeding process often reduces both flavor and nutritional benefits.

With some exceptions, harvest flowers and aerial plant parts in the cool of the morning after the dew has dried. The photosynthesis process that occurs during the day converts flower sugars to starch making them less sweet.

The center disk and reproductive parts (stamen, pollen, sepals, bracts) of blossoms often contribute a bitter flavor and should be removed. Or, taste test before using.

- Additionally, people with asthma or allergies should avoid eating the pollen
- When flower 'petals' is stated in the above list, the petals should be separated from the centers.

After gently washing and prepping your harvest, place in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Flowers and many leaves will last as long as 7 days.

As the flowers are responsible for producing seed, avoid harvesting more that 20% of the flowers in any single area.

Contributing sources include;

What's cooking America.net

Plants for a Future.org