

SEASONAL

In Full Bloom

Edible flowers are available for only a short time, so plan on picking them at the height of their freshness and introducing them into savoury and sweet treats for an extra-pretty touch.

BY IRENE MATYS

—
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ROB FIOCCA

EDIBLE
FLOWER ICED
TEA ICE POPS
P. 169



Edible Flowers 101

Edible flowers can be used to add a splash of colour to all kinds of foods, from salads to mains to desserts. Flower petals are a pretty and adventurous way to expand your culinary aesthetic and enhance your dishes.

1. Violets/Violas are sweet with a floral taste. The edible violet/viola plant can be used to make syrups, brew teas, be added in baked desserts and as garnishes on cakes. Flowers can also be added to salads and soups as garnish.

2. Lavender's initial sensory impact is a strong floral flavour and aroma, with subtle notes of herbaceousness, earthiness, and mint. Different varieties have undertones of fruit, smoke and woodiness. Use the complex culinary herb in moderation. Try it in hearty stews and wine-reduced sauces. It also adds a delightful scent to custards, flans or sorbets, and makes a beautiful garnish for salads, desserts and cocktails.

3. Marigolds have a refreshing lemony flavour with subtle spice. They add vibrant colour to dishes, and can be eaten raw or cooked and used in everything from savoury dishes to desserts, teas and cocktails.

4. Rose's flavour depends on type, colour and soil conditions. While petals are intensely perfumed, their flavour is subtler and a bit fruity (think strawberries and green apples), with complex undertones ranging from fruit to mint to spice. The darker the petals the more pronounced the flavour. The miniature varieties are a beautiful garnish to ice cream and desserts. Larger petals can be sprinkled on desserts or salads. Petals can be used in syrups, jellies and sweet spreads. Be sure to remove the bitter white portion of the petals before using.

5. Pansies are one of the most popular edible flowers, both because you can eat their sepals and because they come in such a wide array of vibrant colours. They have a fresh, slightly spicy, grassy and wintergreen undertone, which makes them a wonderful addition to salads, and they add a great splash of colour. They are also excellent dessert flowers. They can be pressed fresh into the icing of a cake or placed in a bowl of cut fruit.

Pansies can also be candied to give them a sweeter taste and preserve them for longer.

6. Carnations are crinkly, cheerful and have a sweet and spicy flavour. Culinary uses include being steeped in wine, candied, pickled, or used as a syrup base for cocktails and ice cream sundaes. They are great with rice dishes and bright additions to salads or as fresh toppings on savoury dishes.



TIPS

Before venturing out to the garden to harvest flowers remember that not all flowers are edible, and some can make you sick.

Ensure flowers are organic before consuming. Buy from a certified organic grower, speciality store, local grocer's produce section or grow your own.

Make sure to make a positive identification of each variety before using. If the flower is edible, it doesn't necessarily mean the entire plant is. Do careful research or ask an expert to identify edible and inedible plants and parts.

Always wash flowers well in cold water, to remove the odd multi-legged visitor. Growing organic does mean living with insects as they are not sprayed with pesticides or any chemicals.

Remove the stamens and styles from flowers before eating. Pollen can cause allergic reactions in some people, and it can overwhelm the delicate flavour of the petals. Violas and pansies are exceptions to this rule.

For more TIPS and where to buy in Ontario, visit LCBO.com/fdearlysummer22



In Full Bloom

from page 141

EDIBLE FLOWER ICED TEA ICE POPS

Feed your eyes and your taste buds with these colourful edible flower iced tea ice pops. Not only are these ice pops really simple to make, but they're a beautiful and refreshing treat for warm, sunny days. They're made with wildflower honey for a touch of sweetness and a variety of organic flowers for a hint of floral essence.

STRAWBERRY, RASPBERRY & ROSE ICED TEA ICE POPS

1 tea bag, strawberry and
raspberry flavour
1/2 tsp (2 mL) rosewater
3/4 tsp (4 mL) wildflower honey
30 organic rose petals

1. Steep tea bag in 1 cup (250 mL) hot water for 5 minutes.

2. Remove tea bag and stir in rosewater and honey until dissolved. Let tea come to room temperature before filling moulds.

3. Divide the rose petals among three ice-pop moulds. Slowly fill each one with the steeped tea and insert an ice-pop stick in each one.

VIOLET & PANSY TROPICAL ICED TEA ICE POPS

1 tea bag, tropical flavour,
mango and pineapple
1 tsp (5 mL) wildflower honey
18 organic violets
2 organic pansies

1. Steep tea bag in 1 1/3 cups (330 mL) hot water for 5 minutes.

2. Remove tea bag and stir in honey until dissolved. Let tea come to room temperature before filling moulds.

3. Divide violets among three ice-pop moulds. Add pansies to a fourth ice-pop mould. Slowly fill each of the four moulds with the steeped tea and insert an ice-pop stick in each one.

Once all ice-pop moulds are filled, place in freezer for 5 hours or overnight.

CAMOMILE, LEMON & LAVENDER ICED TEA ICE POPS

1 tea bag, camomile and
lemon flavour
3/4 tsp (4 mL) wildflower honey
18 organic lavender flowers

1. Steep tea bag in 1 cup (250 mL) hot water for 5 minutes.

2. Remove tea bag and stir in honey until dissolved. Let tea come to room temperature before filling moulds.

3. Divide the lavender among three ice-pop moulds. Slowly fill each one with the steeped tea and insert an ice-pop stick in each one.

Makes 10 ice pops

TIP 1: Use the ice-pop stick to gently push flowers in place after you've filled your moulds with tea.

TIP 2: If moulds don't have a lid to secure ice-pop sticks, tightly cover top of mould with plastic wrap. Make a small cut on top for each mould and insert ice-pop stick to secure in place.

TIP 3: You can also add flowers to the water in your ice cube trays to add colour and elegance to your water or cocktails.