

FLOWERS... ...GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT



Garden designer Teresa Potter explains how certain flowers can be grown to add colour and flavour to your cooking

in all sorts of places and if left to its own devices, I find it manages to look just right in the places it has chosen to grow.

Thyme is usually grown as a culinary herb and when trimmed regularly to harvest for cooking, it will not have the opportunity to flower. However if it does manage to flower then don't waste them. Pick the tiny blooms off and add to a

salad for both flavour and fragrance.

Vertical spaces are often under utilised and nasturtiums will climb if provided with the correct type of support. Your reward will not only be a superb splash of colour in the garden but a beautiful garnish.

“ THE FLOWERS FROM RUNNER BEANS CAN ALSO BE HARVESTED AND USED IN SALADS ”

The flowers from runner beans can also be harvested and used in salads.

Calendula is a valuable source of nectar for insects. Easy to grow and quick to produce flowers, the petals are great for adding colour to a salad.

Rocket and chives are more commonly grown for their leaves. Towards the end of the growing season the foliage usually passes

its best and they are dug up and discarded. If left they will run to seed and as the flowers appear a few can be picked and added to a salad. The rest can be left and the seeds harvested for next year's crop.



We are all getting used to the idea of growing a few herbs, some vegetables or planting a fruit tree in a spare corner of the garden.

An idea that is not quite as familiar is the practice of harvesting flowers to eat. Incorporating edible flowers into your borders is not as difficult as you may think. Many of the plants that we already grow can provide a tasty treat. However a word of caution would be to know the species of the flowers you are harvesting. Just as with berries and mushrooms some are poisonous and must be avoided.

Many of the flowers harvested are best when added to salads. Borage is a beautiful plant in its own right and is easily incorporated into a planting scheme. It has the added advantage of seeding itself around the garden. It will turn up



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Some plants end up producing more produce than is possible to eat – courgette flowers can be stuffed and baked or deep fried, thus reducing the number of courgettes produced, whilst providing different ways of incorporating them into a dish.

Roses are a fabulous addition to any garden. Make use of some petals by using them to flavour sugar, jams or jellies.

So if you like the idea of harvesting your own produce but don't feel you have the space or time for a vegetable garden, a few well chosen flowers might just be the answer. ■