

How to grow an Edible Flower Patch

Double your pleasure by cultivating edible flowers!

First the beauty of the blooms, followed by delicious delight in the kitchen: add colour and taste on the patio and on the plate. (Caution: only consume flowers that you know are edible & eat sparingly).

Here we consider 6 of the more popular edible blooms of flowers, herbs and vegetables: Borage, Chives, Courgette, Nasturtium, Scotch Marigold and Violets, all are easy to grow from seed or seedlings.



1. Summer drinks



2. Edible flower garnish

Borage (*Borago officinalis*)

The dinky blue flowers of this easily grown plant (be warned it can take over a patch!) are likened to the taste of cucumber. Colour up a cocktail, or add to cream cheese dishes or yoghurts.

As it belongs to the Comfrey family, borage has added benefits - its leaves makes an excellent liquid fertiliser and it is good for both honeybees and bumblebees.



3. Borage

Chives (*Allium schoeonaprasum*)

Regular picking of the purple flowerheads will ensure a continuous supply into autumn. This fussier petal producer needs richer, well drained soil, regular watering and full sun. The mild onion flavoured flowers can be used as a salad garnish, in a cheese sauce or add a kick to your dip. Lovely as cut flowers also.



4. Chives



5. Courgette

Courgette (*Corcubita ssp*)

For improved Scottish growing results, start seed indoors, harden off and only grow on outdoors when all chances of frost have passed. Known for needing much growing space, courgettes will happily grow in a container. Free draining soil in full sun will reap results.

The flower can be used as garnish, or remove the flower with the baby courgette attached then bake or steam. Garden gastronomy? Fill the flower with ricotta or mozzarella and chopped chives, dip in batter, then quickly deep fry. Enjoy!



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How to grow an Edible Flower Patch continued

Nasturtiums (*Tropaeolum majus*)

If you like rocket, you'll love the peppery kick from the milder edible leaves, spicier blooms and the round green seed pods that can be pickled and used as capers. Leaves and flowers make a colourful garnish in salads and in vinaigrette. Thrives in lighter soils, full sun. Refrain from feeding to ensure growth is aimed at flower production. Dwarf and climbing varieties: a nasturtium for every nook.



6. Nasturtiums



7. Violets

Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*)

This perennial sweetie wants a rich soil, out of direct sunlight for its flowers to appear late winter/spring for use with fruity desserts and drinks.

Constant picking of the petals will prolong the flowering period. Prune well late Spring to keep the plant compact and healthy.

Although *V. odorata* can be grown from seed, better to treat yourself to a parma violet perfumed present.

Scotch Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*)

This gifted summer favourite in the garden has culinary callings. Tear the yellow and orange petals over salads, paella, rice and curries. Make calendula ice cubes. Dry the flowers, store air tight, then add to stews or tagines—calendula is known as 'poor man's saffron'.

Easy to grow, self seeding if allowed, in any reasonable soil, enjoying full sun.



8. Scotch Marigold

To learn how to sow seeds, see Year Round Quick Crops

https://trelliscotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/u30/quick_crops_factsheet.pdf

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