Only eat flowers that have been organically grown. Do not eat nursery stock plants, cut flowers or roadside finds, as they may have been treated with chemicals or pesticides.

Pick your edible flowers in the morning, when they have the highest water content. Keep them on dampened paper towel inside a sealed container in the refrigerator for as long as a week. You can revive wilted flowers by floating them in some ice water for a few minutes just before serving.

For a light onion flavour, pick the tiny flowers of an **allium** and use as a topping on potatoes, creamy cheeses or deviled eggs.

Calendula (also called pot marigold) adds both colour and peppery flavour to a wide range of dishes. Try it in a salad or mixed with herbed butter in a light stir-fry.

Plant **chamomile** seeds to harvest flowers for a soothing and relaxing tea. To preserve the flowers for tea, place the flowers on a screen in a well-ventilated, shaded place. Turn them every few days until they are dry then store them in a punctured paper bag.

Corn flower petals look spectacular sprinkled on salads or in fancy drinks.

Pull the clustered flowers of **lavender** apart and sprinkle a few pieces onto chocolate cake. Submerge one or two pieces in a glass of chilled champagne. The sweet, intensely floral flavour of lavender should be used with restraint, but adds an incredible pop to savory dishes as well as desserts.

All garden **nasturtiums** produce edible flowers and leaves. All parts of the nasturtium have a pleasant, sweet, peppery flavor. The flowers can be used whole to decorate salads and a variety of other foods. Remove the long spur at the back of the flower, as this is the nectary and may harbor small insects.

The flower petals of the familiar garden **pansy** are edible and highly decorative. The petals have little flavor, but the whole flower can also be used. It has a grassy, wintergreen undertone that works well in a fruit salad.