



Edible Ornamentals

Most of us would never question eating broccoli. Broccoli is an edible flower. If it's not beyond using flowers as a garnish, what can you do with them in the culinary world? Eat them in almost anything. From nasturtium pizza to monarda ice cream, lavender beef to sautéed day lilies, you can create different flavors using the recipes you already make.

There are a few safety issues to remember before you start. Never use flowers that have been sprayed with pesticides. Always wash flowers before eating. Do not pick flowers from the roadside to eat. If you are allergic to flowers, don't eat them. Eat only the petals and leaves - remove stamens and pistils. **And above all else, check to make sure they are edible. Bookstores and the internet have good sources for what can and can't be eaten.**

Take a basic white or yellow cake or your favorite muffin recipe and add ½ c. of finely chopped flower blossoms or leaves. Lavender, scented geranium and roses are great flavors to start with and you can expand from there. A favorite at The Planter's Palette

is monarda ice cream. It has a great mint flavor and if you use a red variety, it looks like pepper-mint has been added. If you're not into making ice cream the old fashioned way, try softening vanilla ice cream and then adding a cup or so of finely chopped monarda petals and refreezing. Nasturtium and zucchini flowers can be filled with your favorite cream cheese mixture and served as appetizers. Or try hybrid tuberous begonias dipped in flavored yogurt at your next event - a little sour, a little sweet. In the spring, tulips can be filled with a chocolate mousse and presented on a pool of crème Anglaise. Add color and flavor to pasta by chopping a few tablespoons of flowers. Chopped marigolds or calendula, a pinch of garlic and you have a completely different side dish that took next to no time at all.

Many flavors can be added to recipes by making an infusion or tea of the flowers. Focaccia is a very easy yeast bread to make. Before dissolving the yeast, heat the water, add some of your favorite flowers and make a tea. Let the water cool to the proper temperature for the bread, strain

the flowers and continue on with your recipe. Rosemary works well for this. The flavor permeates the bread.

Be creative and adventuresome. Try different combinations. Rosemary shortbread cookies appear (and disappear) at almost every employee gathering. Any flower could easily be substituted. Why not try lavender? Here's our favorite recipe. We hope you enjoy.

Rosemary Shortbread Cookies

Yield: 36

- 1 ½ c. unsalted butter
- 2/3 c. flour
- 2 Tbsp. fresh rosemary, minced
- 2 ¼ c. unbleached, all purpose flour
- ½ c. white or brown rice flour
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. sugar for topping

Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Cream butter in a large bowl. Add sugar. Continue mixing until light and fluffy. Add both types of flour, salt and rosemary to butter mixture. Mix until thoroughly combined. Refrigerate dough for 1 hour or until firm. Roll out dough to ¼ inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake on parchment lined baking sheets 12-15 minutes. Transfer to wire racks to cool.