

Edible flowers- beautiful and delicious

Author: Oganisean Elina
Ling. cons: L. Plămădeală

The work is about edible flowers which play an important role in cuisines all over the world because they have beneficial effects and help prevent cancer.

Edible flowers have been used for centuries to enrich and enliven foods and beverages because of their distinctive flavors and artistic qualities; they add beauty, color and taste to breads, salads, drinks and pastries; to emphasize cakes, puddings and other desserts.

Flowers are rich in pollen, which is a very rich source of protein that helps build and maintain the body formation and nectar, which provides a balanced form of sugars together with a range of minerals and does not have the negative effects of refined sugars such as rotting the teeth. Some edible flowers are high in vitamins and minerals. For instance, roses are very high in vitamin C, marigolds and nasturtiums contain vitamin C, and dandelion blossoms contain vitamins A and C. Flowers are also nearly calorie-free [1].

Flower petals are rich in health protecting antioxidants. Edible flowers like broccoli and cauliflower contain health protecting substances that may provide cancer protection. Edible reproductive parts of flowers provide essential amino acids. Hawthorn blossoms, elder blossoms contain substances that may protect the heart and strengthen capillaries; sour tasting flower blossoms may contain ample amounts of vitamin C; yellow marigolds have nutrients beneficial to the eyes; day lilies have vitamin B, which builds energy, helps grow hair and nails and promotes healthy digestion; squash blossoms contain substances that boost the immune system [2].

Flowers are known to improve mood and have other emotional benefits. Valerian has long been used to reduce anxiety

and sleeplessness, as well as tension headaches and migraines. Rose water aids liver and intestinal function. Camomile (either in tea or whole petals) reduces stress and boost immunity. Begonias are thought to help eliminate toxins and cleanse the liver. Chrysanthemums are thought to help cure colds and fevers [3].

Edible flowers were a really popular part of cuisine. As home gardens and personal cooks disappeared after World War I, as food trends changed and more ornate dishes gave way to simpler ones prepared by the lady of the house and not by a servant, this beautiful and nearly calorie-free food faded from the culinary world. Although there has been a renewed interest in edible flowers in recent years, which has been encouraging, still, this food doesn't get the attention it truly deserves.

Bibliography:

1. *Ernest Small National Research Council Canada, Culinary herbs, 2006, p.136.*
2. *Frances Tenenbaum, Taylor's 50 Best Herbs and Edible Flowers: Easy Plants for More Beautiful Gardens, 1999, p.66.*
3. *Margaret Robins, Edible & medicinal flowers, 2000, p. 128.*