

Title:

Flowers You Can Eat - Nasturtiums

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569

Summary:

Flowers, so bright and cheerful, raise your vibe without even trying. Edible flowers take that energy into the centre of your being, especially when they also have medicinal properties like the gorgeous nasturtium. Their flowers are bright trumpets, heralding sunny days. As children we used to pick the nasturtium flowers, bite off the point at the back of the flower and suck out the nectar, the merest fairy sized sip of sweetness.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Flowers, so bright and cheerful, raise your vibe without even trying. Edible flowers take that energy into the centre of your being, especially when they also have medicinal properties like the gorgeous nasturtium. Their flowers are bright trumpets, heralding sunny days. As children we used to pick the nasturtium flowers, bite off the point at the back of the flower and suck out the nectar, the merest fairy sized sip of sweetness.

The plants grow easily and prolifically from seed, tumbling out of planters with abandon, flowering all shades of fire colours from vermilion to ochre. All they need is moisture and not too rich a soil and you're guaranteed a harvest. Anyone with a herb garden can find a space for a few seeds, though if space is limited confine them to a container or they will happily tumble over all your other herbs.

Nasturtium flowers make cheerful posies as a centrepiece for a lunch table, especially if you have planted a mixture of colours, ranging from gold through bright orange to deep fiery red. Arrange them with a few sprigs of other herbs such as rosemary and fennel to add some texture, lavender flowers for contrast and you have an edible, scented bouquet, perfect to take as a gift when you visit friends.

The nasturtium's best kept secret though is that both the leaves and flowers are edible. Their sharp peppery tang lends a bite of interest to salads and can be a real boon to a jaded palate when the shops only offer bland varieties of lettuce. A few of the round green nasturtium leaves, that look like they could be parasols for mice or fairies, will lift a bland iceberg or butter lettuce into the realms of designer cooking, their bright flowers scattered over to delight the eye and bring an element of fun to your table.

#### Recipe for a Nasturtium Salad

1 lettuce - iceberg, butter or cos  
small bunch of nasturtiums - leaves and flowers  
ripe red tomatoes  
1 tablespoon capers  
feta cheese

Decide quantities to your own taste. The nasturtium leaves are peppery and the more you put in the hotter the salad gets. Wash and dry the lettuce and tear into the size pieces you prefer. Rinse the nasturtium leaves, and tear or chop into rough strips. If you're using baby tomatoes halve them, chop bigger ones into cubes. Cube the feta cheese and sprinkle over the salad with the capers. Top with the whole flowers and maybe one or two whole leaves. This peppery, bright salad is just right to accompany pizza, cold meats or as a starter on its own.

The round leaves are a potent medicinal weapon against sore throats. At the first sign of a sore throat, chew on a nasturtium leaf every two hours. This can sometimes get rid of the sore throat altogether, at others it just prevents it getting too bad. The leaves have natural anti-bacterial properties and are rich in vitamin C. They can also be made into a tea by infusing a few leaves in a cup of boiling water for five minutes and sipped either straight or with the addition of a teaspoon of honey.

In ancient times in its native Peru the nasturtium was used as a wound disinfectant and taken onto battle fields to be used as a poultice and a disinfectant wash. Not bad for a pretty garden flower!

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