

Edible Flowers for Spring Gardens in Louisiana

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Introduction

Edible flowers offer Louisiana gardeners an opportunity to combine ornamental beauty with culinary use. Many flowering plants commonly grown in home landscapes, vegetable gardens, and orchards produce blooms that are safe to eat and add color, flavor, and interest to meals. Louisiana's mild winters and early springs allow a wide range of edible flowers to bloom from March through May.

When harvesting edible flowers, gardeners should always ensure proper plant identification and avoid flowers treated with pesticides or grown along roadsides. Only flowers known to be edible should be consumed, and new flowers should be tried in small amounts.

Edible Flowers That Grow Well in Louisiana

Plant (Scientific name)	Common name	Bloom period	Flavor and use
Viola × wittrockiana; Viola tricolor	Pransy / Johnny-jump-ups	March–May	Mild, slightly sweet; salads
Viola odorata	Violet	March–May	Sweet, floral; candied
Tulbaghia violacea	Society garlic	Spring	Mild onion or garlic flavor
Dianthus spp.	Dianthus	April–May	Clove-like, spicy
Citrus spp.	Citrus blossoms	Spring	Floral citrus aroma
Begonia spp.	Begonia	Spring	Tart, citrus-like
Brassica spp.	Brassica flowers	April–May	Mild to peppery
Pisum sativum	Garden pea	April–May	Sweet pea flavor
Tagetes tenuifolia	Signet marigold	May	Mild citrus flavor
Cercis canadensis	Redbud	March–April	Tart, apple-like
Rosa spp.	Rose	April–May	Floral, aromatic

Edible Herb Flowers

Many culinary herbs produce edible flowers that can be used in the same dishes as the leaves, often with a milder flavor. Allowing herbs to bloom also benefits pollinators and extends garden interest.

Herb (Scientific name)	Common name	Bloom period	Culinary use
Allium schoenoprasum	Chive blossoms	April–May	Mild onion flavor
Allium tuberosum	Garlic chives	Spring	Mild garlic flavor
Salvia officinalis	Garden sage	May–June	Savory garnish
Coriandrum sativum	Coriander	Spring	Citrus and anise notes
Ocimum basilicum	Basil	Late spring–summer	Mild basil flavor
Thymus spp.	Thyme	Spring–summer	Mild thyme flavor
Mentha spp.	Mint	Late spring–summer	Cool, refreshing flavor

Looking for More Edible Flower Resources?

For a more extensive list of edible flowers and plants, Colorado State University Extension provides a comprehensive edible flower list used nationally, while Mississippi State University Extension offers a detailed publication on edible native and naturalized plants of the Southeast. These publications provide additional examples, preparation tips, and safety considerations

Food Safety Tips

- ñ Only eat flowers that are positively identified as edible.
- ñ Never consume flowers treated with pesticides or chemicals.
- ñ Remove bitter or non-edible flower parts when recommended.
- ñ Introduce edible flowers gradually to check for sensitivities.

References

- Mississippi State University Extension. (n.d.). *Edible native plants*.
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