Flowers have been used in cooking throughout history in many different cultures around the world. Even early American settlers commonly used flowers as food. Today, there is a renewed interest in edible flowers for their taste, color, and fragrance, especially in the organic realm of gardening.

“Edible flowers can be used fresh as a garnish or as an integral part of a dish, such as a salad. Squash flowers can be fried in light batter or cornmeal. Some flowers can be stuffed or used in stir-fry dishes. They can be candied; frozen in ice cubes and added to beverages; made into jellies and jams; used to make teas or wines; minced and added to cheese spreads, herbal butters, pancakes, crepes, and waffles. Many flowers can be used to make vinegars for cooking, marinades, or dressings for salad. Herbal flowers normally have the same flavor as their leaves, with the exceptions of chamomile and lavender blossoms, where the flavor is usually more subtle.” According to Erv Evans with North Carolina State University.

Flower flavors can range from sweet to bitter. Some of the sweet flavored flowers include Chamomile, Dandelion, Daylily, Elderberry, Honeysuckle, Lavender, Pineapple Sage, Red Clover, Violet and Rose. If you want a spicy flavor, try Arugula, Broccoli, Nasturtium, Calendula and Signet Marigold. Other flowers that are eaten can have from a bland flavor to a veggie taste including English daisy, Bachelor Buttons, Daylily, Hollyhock, hibiscus, Pansy, Passion Flower, lemon and squash blossoms.

Some flowers are edible, but require a word of caution. Apple flowers should be eaten in smaller amounts, since they may contain cyanide precursors. The flowers of garden peas (pisum sativum) can be eaten, but flowering ornamental peas, like sweet peas, are poisonous. Chamomile may cause an allergic reaction in ragweed sufferers and no more than one cup of its tea should be drunk daily. Break the flowers of chives into small bits because of its strong flavor.

Growing edible flowers is essentially the same as growing flowers for ornamental purposes.
The dreaded heat and humidity of Southeast Missouri is back. Most of us are fortunate enough to not have to deal with the outdoor conditions on a continual basis, but we probably have to face the heat and humidity sometime. Even if you are able to stay indoors most of the time, there are steps you can take to cut the heat in the house.

It is best to stay in an air conditioned place when it is extremely hot. NOAA says, “Only two hours a day in an air-conditioned space can significantly reduce the risk of heat-related illness”. If you do not have air conditioning, try to get to a mall, library, shelter or cooling center during the heat of the day. If there is no way to get to an air conditioned place, stay on the lowest floor of your building out of the sunshine. Blocking the sun with shades or draperies can reduce the heat entering the house by up to 80%. Avoid using the oven and turn off the lights to help keep the house cooler. Take cool baths or showers.

When a person is outdoors for prolonged periods in the heat, sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion or heat (sun) stroke are possible unless precautions are taken to prevent them. The National Weather Service (NOAA) issues heat advisories when conditions are particularly dangerous, so here is some information they supply to help us deal with the heat.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heat Disorder</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>First Aid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunburn</td>
<td>Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches.</td>
<td>Take a shower, using soap, to remove oils that may block pores preventing the body from cooling naturally. If blisters occur, apply dry, sterile dressings and get medical attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat Cramps</td>
<td>Painful spasms usually in leg and abdominal muscles. Heavy sweating.</td>
<td>Firm pressure on cramping muscles or gentle massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat Exhaustion</td>
<td>Heavy sweating, weakness, skin cold, pale and clammy. Weak pulse. Normal temperature possible. Fainting, vomiting.</td>
<td>Get victim to lie down in a cool place. Loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue. If vomiting occurs, seek immediate medical attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat Stroke (Sun Stroke)</td>
<td>High body temperature (106+). Hot, dry skin. Rapid, strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. Victim will likely not sweat.</td>
<td>Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. Move victim to a cooler environment. Try a cool bath or sponging to reduce body temperature. Use extreme caution. Remove clothing. Use fans and/or air conditioners. DO NOT GIVE FLUIDS</td>
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Most people have realized that in the past 30 years the number of children raised by their grandparents has doubled. According to the U.S. Census, 6.5 million or 9% of children younger than 18 years old are living in a home that includes at least one grandparent. Today, at least 1.6 million children live in their grandparents’ home without either parent being present.

Why?
Children are raised by grandparents because of parental difficulties such as substance abuse, prison, abuse and neglect, abandonment, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, divorce, and death. Grandchildren come to their grandparent’s care through family circumstances, a child welfare agency, police department, or by legal adoption or guardianship. This change may be sudden or gradual and may occur soon after birth or when the child is older.

Grandchildren explained how their grandparents’ love and stability allowed them to succeed in school, stay out of trouble, develop strong morals, and religious values.

What about the children?
Children raised by their grandparents are at increased risk for emotional and behavioral problems in adulthood. Grandchildren have experienced in their early lives divided loyalties, rejection, loss, guilt, and anger. Many of the children in a research study, felt disappointed and hurt by their mother’s inability to spend time together with them.

The Parents
Parents have many different roles when grandparents raise their children. Parents may have little rights to their child, and contact may be illegal. Or they may interact with the child on a daily basis. A common pattern of parental involvement is usually distant, with conflict with the grandparent. Adolescents in this research study described their mothers as immature and selfish, whereas others described them as confidants. Fathers were mostly out of the picture, and the girls felt anger and the boys felt sadness. Many grandchildren distance themselves from their parents. The grandparents in my support group feel that these parents are “stuck in adolescent” and have never grown up to take on their parental responsibility.

The Grandchild-Grandparent Relationship
Grandparents feel close to the grandchildren they are raising. However, the grandparent-grandchild relationship may be difficult when the grandchildren have physical, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. Other research studies have shown that a larger than average number of grandchildren raised by their grandparents have such difficulties, and this could be a reason for abandonment. Timing is a factor, as grandchildren may have stronger bonds with their grandparents when they have lived with them for the majority of their lives. According to Doblin-MacNab (2009, 169), “grandchildren explained how their grandparents’ love and stability allowed them to succeed in school, stay out of trouble, develop strong morals, and religious values.” Grandchildren not only love and show affection to their grandparents but they emphasized in this research study the deep gratitude and respect for their grandparents efforts in raising them. The early adolescent grandchild did describe the generation gap, strict expectations, and limitations of the age and health of grandparents as challenges of the relationship.

Community Response
Grandchildren raised by their grandparents have unique needs that may require the use of therapists, school counselors, and health care providers. Classroom teachers need to be aware of the child’s family background to facilitate learning. Grandparents and grandchildren may benefit from support groups, individual or family therapy to share their feelings and gain support.

Reminder: Grand Family Conference
To keep mild temperature loving plants such as pansies and calendula thriving, take extra care to mulch, fertilize and irrigate regularly. Water at the base of the plants to keep disease problems at bay. Chemicals for pest problems should be avoided. Hand pick or use mechanical, cultural or biological means of decreasing pest numbers. Many gardeners who use edible flowers on a regular basis locate their edible flower gardens away from other plants to avoid chemical spray drift. Many edible flowers can also be grown in containers. For harvesting flowers, flavors can vary with environmental conditions and varieties that are chosen. Make sure to taste some of the flowers before harvesting a large amount. Flowers should be harvested in the morning or the cool of the day.

Choose flowers that are at their peak and avoid ones that are not fully open or past their prime. Storage in a cool basement or refrigerator in moist baggies is recommended until flowers can be used. Most flowers with short stems need to be used within 3-4 hours of harvest. It is best to remove stamens, pistils, sepals or any part of the flower that might distract from the true flavor of the petals.

Do not eat commercially available flowers from florist or garden center unless you know they were grown for eating. It is best to steer clear of any flower that you suspect contains pesticide, growth regulator, or fertilizer residues. Beware of using roadside flowers. Just remember that not every flower is edible and not everyone will like edible flowers. As with any new foods, start out moderately.

### Top 10 Most Commonly Used Edible Flowers
- Violas
- Nasturtiums
- Marigolds
- Borage
- Chives
- Pansies
- Squash Blossoms
- Daylily
- Snapdragon
- Rose