

Know 10 Edible Flowers

About Community in Bloom

Community in Bloom (CIB) is a programme that was launched by the National Parks Board (NParks) in 2005. It aims to nurture a gardening culture among Singaporeans by encouraging and facilitating community gardening efforts. It is also an opportunity to build community bonds and strengthen social resilience in our City in Nature.



Share your love for nature and animals at
#NParksBuzz #AnimalBuzzSG

In support of:



For more information, visit our website at www.nparks.gov.sg/cib or email us at CommunityInBloom@nparks.gov.sg

For more gardening resources and tips, visit go.gov.sg/gardening-resources

To learn more about our City in Nature, scan the QR code or visit www.nparks.gov.sg/about-us/city-in-nature



This brochure features 10 of the most commonly cultivated 'edible flowers' in Singapore. This term generally refers to the flowers of plants that can be eaten raw or cooked such as the Common Purslane, Cranberry Hibiscus, Ulam Raja and Jasmine.

There are numerous varieties of edible flowering plants that can be grown in Singapore. We hope that this brochure will encourage you to try growing these edibles on your own or in your community garden!

Why Grow Edible Flowers?

Flowering plants are often cultivated for their attractive blooms and to improve the aesthetics of a garden.

However, some can also be grown for culinary use. Edible flowers are traditionally added to dishes for colour, but they also have unique textures and flavours depending on how they are used.

Some flowers have pigments that can even be used to dye other ingredients like rice!

How Do I Get My Plants to Flower More?

Plants require essential nutrients for growth, particularly nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P) and potassium (K). As plants grow, nutrients in the soil are depleted over time. Fertilisers can be added to replenish these nutrients and increase soil fertility, promoting healthy plant growth.

Plants require phosphorous to produce flowers. Gardeners may use an organic or inorganic fertiliser with high levels of this nutrient to promote flowering. Here are some general differences between organic and inorganic fertilisers:

Organic fertilisers are derived from decaying plant and animal matter. Some organic fertilisers with high levels of phosphorous include fish emulsions and bonemeal.

Inorganic fertilisers are derived from minerals in the soil or made via chemical processes. An inorganic fertiliser with a higher level of phosphorous would have an NPK ratio of 1:2:2.

Try growing these edible blooms in your garden or spotting them in our public parks!

Perennials are plants which can live for more than two years. Unlike annual plants, they do not need to be replanted yearly. By growing perennials, gardeners can enjoy harvesting their flowers for a longer time!

Annual plants can live for up to around 12 months before flowering, setting seed and dying. These plants are typically grown from seeds and will need to be replanted regularly. Gardeners can periodically prune emerging leaves and floral stalks to prolong the plants' lifespan.

The annuals in this brochure are marked with:



Please refrain from plucking the flowers in our public parks and gardens. Let's leave the flowers be for other visitors to enjoy!

Bamboo Orchid

Scientific Name
Arundina graminifolia



Plant Characteristics

The Bamboo Orchid is a perennial herb. The flowers have two white or pink petals and one bright purple lip with a yellow patch in the centre.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Bamboo Orchid is native to Singapore. It is an easy growing plant that does well in moist to well-draining soils and can even tolerate waterlogged conditions. It prefers full sun with moderate watering. It can be propagated by seeds and division.

Uses

Bamboo Orchid flowers can be consumed as a vegetable. In East Malaysia, locals often stir-fry the flowers of a highland variety of this species. It is described to have a bitter taste, much like bitter gourd.

Butterfly Pea

Scientific Name
Clitoria ternatea



Plant Characteristics

The Butterfly Pea is a slender, climbing perennial with short and soft hairs on its stems. It has thin, paper-like leaflets and is grown for its attractive funnel-shaped flowers that range from white to pink, light blue, and dark blue.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Butterfly Pea grows well on garden trellises or fences. It should be planted in well-draining or fertile loamy soil. The plant thrives under full sun and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by seeds.

Uses

An edible blue dye can be extracted from the flowers of the Butterfly Pea and is often used in traditional Malay cuisine, such as in a rice dish called *nasi kerabu* and a variety of desserts such as Peranakan *putri salat*. The extracted dye will turn pink when mixed with an acidic component such as lemon juice, making it an interesting ingredient to add to beverages.

Common Purslane



Scientific Name
Portulaca oleracea



Plant Characteristics

The Common Purslane is an annual succulent with hairy, reddish stems. It has fleshy leaves with rounded tips. Its flowers are small, bright yellow and cup-shaped with five petals.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Common Purslane is a fuss-free, easy-growing plant that can survive in various types of soils, ranging from fertile and loamy, to poor and infertile soils. It can also thrive under full sun with little watering. The plant is fast-growing and can be propagated by seeds or stem cuttings.

Uses

The flowers of the Common Purslane are usually added to salads or stir-fries and enjoyed for their slightly tart and salty taste.

Cranberry Hibiscus

Scientific Name
Hibiscus acetosella



Plant Characteristics

The Cranberry Hibiscus is a woody, perennial shrub that can grow up to 2.5 m tall. Its glossy leaves and stems are a distinctive deep red colour. The flowers are also a deep red with a dark purple centre, making them appear like an 'eye'.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Cranberry Hibiscus can thrive in various soil types. However, it requires good drainage as the plant is susceptible to soilborne diseases. It prefers full sun with moderate watering and can be propagated through seeds and stem cuttings.

Uses

The red flowers and leaves of the Cranberry Hibiscus are often used to make tea. The flowers can be eaten raw as a vegetable in salads or in stir-fries. The plant is also often grown for its ornamental foliage and planted as screening hedges to beautify landscapes.

Globe Amaranth



Scientific Name
Gomphrena globosa



Plant Characteristics

The Globe Amaranth is a herbaceous annual shrub that can grow from 20 to 60 cm tall. Its young leaves are woolly-white and turn green with sparse white hairs as they mature. The flowers are usually bright-coloured, ranging from white to pink to purple.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Globe Amaranth is an easy-growing plant that can thrive in dry to well-draining to heavy clay soils. It prefers full sun and moderate watering. The plant can be propagated by seeds.

Uses

The inflorescences of the Globe Amaranth can be steeped in boiling water to make a tea containing Vitamin C and E, which is thought to be nourishing and can reduce fatigue. The tea has a fresh floral fragrance with a sweet and mild taste.

Mexican Tarragon

Scientific Name
Tagetes lucida



Plant Characteristics

The Mexican Tarragon is a perennial, semi-woody shrub that can grow up to 80 cm tall. Its leaves are linear in shape and narrow, growing less than 1 cm across. It has small, orange-yellow flowers.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Mexican Tarragon prefers well-draining soils, with moderate watering. It can thrive under full sun to semi-shaded light conditions. The plant can be propagated by seeds, stem cuttings and division.

Uses

The flowers of the Mexican Tarragon can be consumed raw in salad mixes. In Latin America, the flowers and leaves are brewed to make a popular tea. The plant is often grown in herb gardens due to its various edible plant parts and brightly coloured flowers.

Society Garlic

Scientific Name
Tulbaghia violacea



Plant Characteristics

The Society Garlic is a perennial herb that can grow up to 30 cm tall. Its leaves are linear and thin. The small, trumpet-shaped flowers grow in a cluster and are purple in colour. Its fruits are triangular-shaped capsules that split open when ripe.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Society Garlic thrives on well-draining soils and grows best in semi-shaded to full sun conditions. The plant can tolerate partial shade albeit with decreased flowering. It prefers moderate watering and can be propagated by seeds or division.

Uses

The flowers of the Society Garlic are often used as a garnish or eaten raw in salad mixes. The flowers add a subtle sweet, garlicky taste to dishes.

Tonkin Jasmine

Scientific Name
Telosma cordata



Plant Characteristics

The Tonkin Jasmine is a woody perennial with a twining growth habit and can grow up to 10 m in length. The stems have soft hairs when young which become smooth as they mature. Its small, fragrant flowers are yellow-green to orange and have hairs in the centre.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Tonkin Jasmine prefers well-draining and fertile loamy soils, with moderate watering. It thrives under full sun. The plant can be propagated by stem cuttings.

Uses

The flowers of the Tonkin Jasmine are often cooked in stir-fries with eggs or meat or boiled in savoury soups in several Asian cuisines. The oil, extracted from the flowers, is used in perfumes.

Torch Ginger

Scientific Name
Etilingera elatior



Plant Characteristics

The Torch Ginger is a perennial herb that can grow up to 6 m tall. The leaves can grow up to 85 cm long and 18 cm wide. Its name is derived from its bright-red or pink coloured flowers that shoot up from the ground, resembling a flaming torch.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Torch Ginger grows best in moist soils. It prefers full sun or semi-shaded conditions, with lots of water. The plant can be propagated by seeds or division.

Use

The young flower buds of the Torch Ginger are commonly eaten in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. In Singapore, they are used in dishes such as *rojak*, *laksa* or Peranakan fish curry for their unique fragrance and taste. They can also be used as a garnish for sour-savoury soups or eaten raw with a spicy sauce in Thailand.

Ulam Raja



Scientific Name
Cosmos caudatus



Plant Characteristics

The Ulam Raja is an annual or short-lived perennial herb that can grow up to 3 m tall. Its leaves are triangular and segmented. The flowers are purple or red with a yellowish-green centre.

Cultivation and Plant Care

The Ulam Raja thrives in fertile loamy and well-draining soils. It grows best under full sun with moderate watering. This plant can be propagated by seeds.

Uses

The name Ulam Raja, which is a Malay translation for King's Salad, is derived from its edible flowers, roots and leaves that are believed to be rich in medicinal properties. It is also consumed raw as a vegetable in Malay cuisines. The young shoots are described to taste like mangoes.