

Paris Holistic Health



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Newsletter**

Devour the Flowers

And not just with your eyes but with your mouth as well. I was at a formal dinner one night and when my dinner was served the plate was garnished with a beautiful flower, a nasturtium. The flower was a lovely shade of magenta and white. It was very exotic and really dressed the plate up nicely. However, garnishes are not just for dressing up the plate. Anything placed on a plate in a restaurant must be edible. This got me to wonder about the health benefits of edible flowers.



According to Dr. James Duke, an ethnobotanist and former researcher for the US Department of Agriculture, edible flowers contain an assortment of vitamins and minerals. Additionally, these beauties contain wonderful phytochemicals like lutein, lycopene, quercetin, rutin, and zeaxanthin. You may have heard of some of these plant chemicals since many of them are front and center on the nutritional stage these days. So let me tell you a little bit about these funny sounding chemicals, how they can benefit the body, and what flowers may contain them.

Lutein is a plant chemical that helps to protect the eyes by absorbing damaging radiation from the sun. Additionally, it supports the immune system and nervous system. It is beneficial for heart health and cancer prevention. Some flowers that contain lutein include calendula, pumpkin blossom, St. John's wort, dandelion, and nasturtium.

Lycopene is an antioxidant that helps to reduce excessive amounts of free radicals. If left unchecked, free radicals have been shown to be a contributing factor in serious conditions like cancer and cardiovascular disease as well as contribute to the aging process. Calendula and dog rose are two flowers that contain lycopene.

Quercetin is both anti-inflammatory and antioxidant. It also has antihistamine benefits that will help those with allergies. Research is being conducted to determine its benefits in cancer, eczema, asthma, and fibromyalgia. If you want the antihistamine and other benefits from quercetin, add a few violets, capers (a flower bud), lemon blossoms, meadowsweet, damask rose, or linden blossoms into your diet.

Rutin is a plant chemical that is commonly found in the rinds of citrus fruits. It is particularly beneficial for capillary health, cancer prevention, and immune system support. Like quercetin, it is also anti-inflammatory and antioxidant. Rutin is found in flowers like violets, calendula, caper, and elder flowers.

Zeaxanthin is similar to lutein in chemical composition and also helps to keep our eyes healthy. This plant chemical may help to prevent macular degeneration, tumors, and cancer. Additionally, it is believed to be protective for the liver. Some flowers that contain zeaxanthin are pumpkin blossoms, nasturtium, and violets.

I would be remiss if I didn't put in a word of caution regarding the consumption of edible flowers. Before consuming any flower, you should know that your flowers are organically grown and not treated with anything for preservation. Also, if you have allergies you might want to consider skipping the flowers all together as there is the risk of an allergic reaction if you are already sensitized to their pollen.

So, the next time you see a beautiful floral garnish on your plate, don't just look at it, devour it. To learn more about health and herbs that can support your health, Paris Holistic Health is here to help. Call today, 443-243-4728, to schedule your complimentary 30 minute session.

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