SPRINGTIME ON THE FARM

Spring is on the hillsides,
Spring is everywhere,
In the hills and valleys.
Even in the air.

Hyacinths and tulips
Pushing with their might,
Breaking out of prison,
Seeking for the light.

Happy birds are building,
With a merry song,
Nests to house their babies
When the days are long.

Life itself is stirring,
With its radiant charm.
Oh, what is half so wonderful
As springtime on the farm!

—Eunice E. Heizer

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Wild and Cultivated Flowers You Can Eat

by Rebecca Slater

If you do all your shopping at the grocery store or local farmer’s market, you are missing out on some interesting foods, those found in your own backyard. I’m talking about edible flowers.

Here are some you might want to sample:

**Apple** *(Malus sp.)* —Apple blossoms have a mildly sweet, floral flavor. These trees grow wild in some parts of the Northeast. If you eat blossoms from cultivated apples, make sure they haven’t been sprayed yet. They also work well as a pretty pink and white garnish.

**Chicory** *(Cichorium intybus)* —Chicory is a common roadside weed with beautiful periwinkle blue flowers in midsummer. Many people who lived through the Depression remember making a coffee substitute out of Chicory. Make sure you don’t pick flowers on heavily traveled roads because of the pollution absorbed by the plant. Chicory has a pleasant, mild-bitter taste that has been compared to endive.

**Calendula** *(Calendula officinalis)* —Yes, this is the common weed. If the yellow flowers are picked young, they have a sweet, honey-like flavor. Mature flowers are bitter. Do not eat Dandelions from lawns that have been sprayed! As you know, Dandelions will grow just about anywhere.

**Daylily** *(Hemerocallis sp.)* —Daylilies, which are hardly, indestructible perennials, have lovely blossoms in many shades. Their flavor is a combination of asparagus and zucchini. Some people think that different colored blossoms have different flavors. They make a nice garnish and may be stuffed for hors-d’oeuvres or made into fritters.

**Lavender** *(Lavandula sp.)* —Lavender is a beautiful and wonderful smelling perennial or small shrub depending on where you live. The flowers are lavender of course, and have a perfumed flavor. The flavor may be very intense, so remember that flowers aren’t just appealing to the eyes or nose. Many are edible and can be used to add a “touch of spice” to your everyday dishes.

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For more information contact Leonard P. Perry, Extension Professor, Department of Plant and Soil Science, can be contacted at 11 Hills Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, (802) 656-4978. Check out Perry’s Perennial Pages at www.uvm.edu/~pass/perry/.

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