

## Gardening Group Report for November by Sue

Dianne Nicol-Brown is a lecturer at Houghall Horticultural College, and in her spare time runs an organic nursery and B&B at Trimdon Grange, gave a fascinating look into the world of edible flowers and herbs, using them to add colour and flavour to savoury and sweet dishes, also making flavoursome butters, oils, and vinegars.

A few words of warning - if in doubt, do not eat, pick fresh on a dry morning, and use the petals only.

Alpine pinks and Sweet William give a clove like favour added to cakes and sugar. Bergamot, strong spicy scent which is used to make Earl Grey tea and also compliments bacon, poultry, rice, and pasta. Chrysanthemum adds colour to cream soups and eggs and could be used in place of saffron. Lavender use to flavour cakes or sugar, also roast pork, lamb, or chicken. To make Lavender vinegar, grind lavender flowers to fill one-third of a jar top up with cider vinegar and leave for four weeks. Nasturtium, add the peppery flowers to salads, leaves can also be used for a milder flavour. Pot marigold, another peppery taste to add to soups and stews, can be dried for use later in winter. Primrose, use to decorate cakes fresh or crystallized, can be frozen in ice cubes. Rose, all roses are edible and can be used to flavour, sugar, or cakes. To make rosewater, Boil a quarter cup of dried rose petals 1.5 cup water, bring to the boil, then simmer. Scented geranium, use lemon scented to line a cake tin. Sweet violet can be used in sweet or savoury dishes as well as tea, can be candied ,use pansy's as garnish for cake and souffle.

Herb flowers give a more subtle flavour, Borage has a cucumber flavour, freeze in ice cubes to add to drinks. Chives mild onion flavour, leaves and flowers can be used. Lemon Balm, strip the leaves into a teapot add boiling water, Lime variety has a distinct lime flavour. Mint, all types of mint, strawberry, ginger, pineapple etc. all can be used in oil, vinegar, butter, apple mint is best for mint sauce, strawberry mint makes a fabulous tea. Rosemary used fresh in salad and tomato dishes or flavour butter.

I think we all left the meeting with lots of ideas to spice up our meals

## 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

Our last coach trip of the year is to Nunnington Hall – 'Christmas Through the Ages' is the theme. This is now fully booked, if you are unable to go, please let Pauline know as there is a waiting list.

**2023. Your new convenors Julie Archer and Kate Kean take over and will be in touch about future events.**