

On a lovely early summer day, Suzy Sherwood (see picture at right), a chef trained at the [California Culinary Academy](#), treated us to both information and sensory delights from her home garden.



The menu was varied, including raw nasturtiums as well as her [homemade chamomile ice cream](#)...to die for! She also introduced us to “shrubs” – a drink familiar to our ancestors and resurrected for our pleasure. Again, you really have to get hold of some of this stuff – will make you weep for joy.

Here is a brief recap of some of the things that Suzy talked about, and which you can easily grow/prepare in your own home. Note: all of these plants are well-suited to Concord’s environment, but examine your yard for the best place to plant some of these. That way you can grow them forever.

1. Nasturtiums -- colorful, peppery-flavored (some say radish-like flowers & leaves that enhance salads. They are also loved by bees and are drought tolerant plants that self-seed easily.
2. Calendula – “poor man’s/woman’s saffron”. Pretty, buttery orange flower.
3. Mexican tarragon (*Tagetes lucida*) – minty flavor with anise overtones. Use leaves in soup.
4. Day lilies – all parts are edible, BUT 5% of the population is allergic to them.
5. Basil, thyme, French sorrel – I think you know what to do with these go-to herbs.
6. Lemon verbena – Use leaves for tea, potpourri.
7. Lavender – can be made into a flavored sugar, but be sure to use bartender’s sugar.
8. Peach leaves – the [French Laundry](#) restaurant puts it in ice cream for a lovely almond-y flavor.
9. Iris – used to make [orris root](#), which is a fixative for potpourri.
10. Roses – use petals in a fresh salad; can also be candied (we tried some: YUM).
11. Johnny jump-ups, violets – candy with sugar; will keep up to 1 year!
12. Chive flowers – use for making vinegar.
 - a. Vinegar used for adding flavors must be at least a 5% strength, which should be easy to find.
 - b. Vinegars can be used to make [shrubs](#).



For more information on using plants from your garden in cooking:

- Anything by [Rosalind Creasy](#)
- [Olive Vitality in Grass Valley](#) as source for quality, premade shrub syrups
- <http://www.eattheweeds.com/> ...self-explanatory, we hope ☺