



CULINARY ARTS MONTH

Along with summer comes outdoor activities and especially picnics, barbeques and receptions. Promoting one of America's favorite past times could be a big draw.

By Carrie Burns



July will soon be known as the month to eat. With events such as National Hot Dog Month, National Ice Cream Month and National Baked Bean Month, people will be eating 24 hours a day. All of these, though, can be put into one category: Culinary Arts Month, which is the month of July.

You can definitely benefit from celebrating and promoting Culinary Arts Month, and it can be pretty easy. Pull out all of your food-related items (grills; tables and chairs; plates, bowls, glasses and silverware; picnic baskets; coolers; citronella candles; herbs; vegetables; seeds; and edible flowers, see page 34) and display them with a sign such as, "July is National Culinary Arts Month, Celebrate it with a Picnic."

Depending on how far you would like to go with it, you can schedule a day or a week and invite someone to grill, and hand out free samples, beside the display. This person can be a caterer, a friend who's a great cook or maybe even a local author that's trying to promote a new grilling cookbook, in which case, you'd want to have copies of the book on hand as well. Make an event out of it. The exact formula doesn't matter as much as giving your customers a taste of what Culinary Arts Month is all about, all the while promoting your products.

FOOD AND GARDENING

It is pretty obvious that food and gardening go together when it comes to vegetables and herbs. But, there are many other add-ons that you might not have considered. And, if you





Torches

The English Garden Collection features an elegant terra cotta look in a high-fired stoneware garden torch that, unlike terra cotta, will remain durable in outdoor settings. The collection offers classic forms reminiscent of English country cottage gardens. These torches combine the look of English garden antique finish with fiberglass wicks for a handcrafted torch that will last a lifetime. Available in two sizes and three styles: Handle Vessel, Four Sided Vessel and Round Scored Vessel models. Gardendance Inc. (919) 245-0400. **Write in 1408**

Insect control

Natural Rx Granules is a new method for controlling insects that damage the under surfaces of flowering, vegetable and fruit plants. The granules release organic vapors, which rise from the ground and immediately provide protection to leaf undersurfaces. Dr. T's Nature Products. (800) 299-6288. **Write in 1409**



Apron

Candystripe apron, a new addition to the Gardener's Collection and the Cuisine Collection, is made of 100 percent cotton and has front pockets to hold gardening/cooking tools and matching gloves. It is fun to wear in the kitchen or the garden and is available in an apron with coordinating garden gloves and oven mitt. Earthly Things. (773) 506-6490. **Write in 1411** ▶

Don't Forget the Herbs and Spices!

A trend on the rise is herb gardening for medicinal uses, aromatherapy and, of course, culinary uses. Because it can be done indoors, consumers are intrigued by it. Be sure to include the basics, either seed or finished: basil, thyme, chives, dill, sesame, parsley and cilantro.



Kid's kit

Kidz Garden Kits includes reusable 4-inch rubber pots; compressed soil disks; three different types of seeds; plant markers and pre-printed stickers; a mat for keeping the indoor work area clean; heavy-duty, kid-sized gloves; light weight trowel; instructions and activity sheet. Each kit, geared to ages six and up, is designed with an easy-to-carry plastic handle. Three varieties are

available: Vines, Flowers and Vegetables. Available in a four-unit case or an 18-unit display shipper with a header card. There is also a combo display shipper that includes six kits of each variety. Dalen Products. (800) 747-3256. **Write in 1410**

haven't thought of it, your customers probably haven't either. Anything that can be done outdoors can relate to the lawn and garden industry — eating, grilling, sports, relaxing, sunning. If you carry products for these activities, use them in your display.

Cookbooks will be great in the display too, along with recipes from your employees. Title them something like "Our favorite recipes using our garden." Make sure they list by variety name the tomato plant you sell or the herbs you have. Bringing employees into an event like this is a great way to make them feel involved in activities at, and the success of, your garden center.

CREATING AN OUTDOOR DINING ROOM

Especially in the summer, Americans love to eat outdoors. Show your customers how to create an outdoor dining room. Set up a table and chairs, matching placemats, napkins and dishes; torches or lights; a grill with tools and oven mitts; and any other accessories you feel might belong. Make sure to include the bug repellents: screens, citronella candles, bug zappers, lamps and bug spray. 🐛

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Picnic bag

The Super Deluxe Backpack, equipped for four people, is designed with craftsmanship. Other features include, 45- x 45-inch tablecloth, zippered 60-percent expandable cooler section, bottom straps for blankets or jackets, side straps for picnic accessories, extra front storage compartment, insulated detachable wine pouch and Thermal Shield insulation system. The Super Deluxe Backpack is available in navy, green, burgundy and black. Picnic at Ascot Inc. (877) 742-6429. **Write in 1407**



Bistro set

This cedar Bistro Set is made of all natural cedar for long-lasting, safe outdoor and indoor eating enjoyment. It is just one in a full line of quality cedar products for both home and garden. Rustic Natural Cedar Furniture Company. (401) 435-6777. **Write in 1412**

Garden torch

Made of solid die cast aluminum and galvanized steel, this garden torch has been designed to last many years. Torches are offered in six colors to coordinate with patio furniture and other garden products and are also available in a wall sconce style. Purchase 60 pieces and receive a free POP display. Starlight. (561) 470-5583. **Write in 1413**



Mosquito Control

A granular larvicide, Pre-Strike kills mosquito larvae before they can develop into breeding, biting adults. Available in easy-to-use, one-pound shaker bottles, the granules are applied to standing water, where mosquitoes breed and hatch. One application provides control for up to 21 days. When used as directed, the product has no adverse effects on people, pets or other animals, fish or vegetation. Wellmark International. (800) 248-7763. **Write in 1414**



EDIBLE FLOWERS

The use of candied violets as an exquisite visual addition to dishes and deserts may not come as a surprise, as flowers have become not only a visual stimulant, but also an important role in the sense of taste and smell. Introducing flowers as food might be considered a new trend, but in fact, it is a tradition dating back centuries. Many cultures, especially Asian, have incorporated flowers into their cuisine.

Edible flowers are produced and marketed in ways very similar to herbs; however, the market for edible flowers is not as large as the market for herbs. They can be marketed fresh, sugar-coated, dried in bulk or singles, and by weight.

In addition to being widely popular with designers and chefs, the edible flower market continues to grow because of increased consumer interest in recent years.

Many garden flowers can be used as edible garnish or to add and enhance flavors and color to a cooked dish. For example, edible flowers can brighten up traditional salad mixes.

When selling edible flowers, be sure they were grown without chemicals or only treated with organic pesticides such as the ones used on fruits and vegetables, since the flowers must be free of any chemical residue and relay that to your customers. It is also important to be aware of the types of flowers being used, because some flowers are poisonous. It is estimated that about 100 types of common garden flowers are edible. Here are just a few:

- Calendula.** Petals have a slightly peppery taste and can be used in a salad.
- Chrysanthemums.** Can be blanched, and the petals can be used on a salad. The leaves could be also used in vinaigrette.
- Daylilies.** Colored petals can be used to decorate any salad.
- Geraniums.** Can be used to add color to salad as well as decorate a cake.
- Lavender.** Sweet, floral flavor, with lemon and citrus notes. Flowers look beautiful and taste good in a glass of champagne, with chocolate cake or as garnish for sorbets and ice creams.
- Marigolds.** Have mild pepper flavor and are wonderful for salads, soups, sauces, or with fish or roasts.
- Mustard Flowers.** Mild in taste, yellow or white in color. Young leaves can be steamed, used as a herb, eaten raw or cooked like spinach.
- Nasturtium.** Tastes slightly peppery and salty and has a radish-like flavor.
- Pansies.** Flower has a mint or wintergreen taste. Pansy flowers are often used as candied cake garnish, a salad garnish or in soup.
- Rose Petals.** Can be used in salad to add a wonderful scent, texture and color.
- Squash blossoms.** Flowers from zucchini or summer squash are edible.
- Snapdragon.** Delicate garden variety can be bland to bitter. Flavors depend on type, color and soil conditions.
- Violets.** Perfumed petals make fine garnishes for cakes. The flower can also be candied.

— Neda Simeonova