Lucky reception children from Chase Bridge Primary School and Thomson House were treated to a visit to the magical Petersham Nurseries. The wonderful Walled Kitchen Garden in the grounds of the 17th Century Petersham House was the perfect setting for a lesson in growing and cooking delicious fresh vegetables. The garden has lots of exciting varieties of heritage vegetables, fruits, herbs and edible flowers. Food growing at Petersham Nurseries is overseen by Culinary Director, Lucy Boyd, with the menu at the restaurant being designed around what’s in season and growing well.

Chris’s Comment

“For early courgettes, sow into seed trays and place on a windowsill. Transplant your strongest seedlings into individual pots and grow indoors until they are ready to plant outside. Choose a sunny, sheltered spot and plant your courgettes 90cm apart giving them a good mulch to help the soil hold moisture. Feed your plants weekly with a liquid feed and harvest courgettes regularly when they reach 10cm long. Courgettes need plenty of water but take care to always water at the base of the plant or they’ll rot. The large fleshy flowers can be eaten, but fewer courgettes will develop if you harvest too many.”

Petersham’s Pick

Courgette Flowers.

Home Grown Hints from Petersham Nurseries

“Make sure you pick the male flowers, these are the ones without the baby courgette plant growing behind”
Fried Courgette Flowers

Ingredients
6 courgette flowers
1 free range egg white
2 tablespoons of plain flour
Juice of half a lemon
Splash of sparkling water
Light oil
Sea salt

Equipment
Mixing bowl
Whisk
Slotted spoon
Sieve
Lemon squeezer
Heavy based frying pan

Method
1. Gently open each courgette flower and make sure the stamen is removed, as it is not a good bit to eat.
2. Heat the oil in the pan until it is really hot. Make sure you have an adult do this bit!
3. Meanwhile, make the batter in the mixing bowl by whisking the egg white in a large bowl until stiff, then sift in the flour.
4. Add the lemon juice and the water to the flour and egg white until everything is combined, using as few strokes as possible.
5. To see if the oil is hot enough, drop in a piece of bread, this should brown in about 20 seconds.
6. Then dip each flower into the batter to coat, then fry in the oil 2 or 3 flowers at a time.
7. When golden, remove with a slotted spoon, sprinkle with sea salt and drain briefly on kitchen paper and serve.

Cook’s Code
The stamen is the yellow bulbous bit in the middle of the plant where the flower produces its pollen.

Reception’s Review
“I didn’t think I would like the courgette flowers, but I tried one and it was really tasty!”

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