Seasonal Garden Salad

Fresh from the garden: edible flowers, garlic, salad leaves, soft-leaved herbs

This recipe should be one of your basic recipes for frequent use. Vary the ingredients according to the seasons, including leaves and herbs of different shapes and colours, both bitter and sweet. You can add croutons and seeds, and edible flowers such as borage, nasturtium or even young chive flowers. Make sure you wash and dry the salad leaves very gently, without bruising them.

Equipment:

metric measuring cups and spoons
clean tea towel
chopping board
cook's knife
large bowl
scissors
mortar and pestle
citrus juicer
mixing spoon
whisk
tongs
serving bowls or platters

Ingredients:

For the salad:

2 large handfuls of mixed salad leaves (whatever is ready for harvesting from the garden)

1 large handful of mixed small leaves and soft-leaved herbs (such as rocket, beetroot leaves, baby spinach, sorrel, mizuna, parsley)

Any seasonal ingredients that can be eaten raw:

- In winter/spring try beetroot, broccoli, carrot, fennel, peas, snow peas
- In summer/autumn try basil, beans, capsicum, cucumber, tomato

For the classic vinaigrette dressing:

1 garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped

salt, to taste

juice of a lemon, or 3 tbsp red-wine vinegar

⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil

freshly ground black pepper, to taste

What to do:

1. Prepare all of the ingredients based on the instructions in the ingredients list.
2. Tear the stems away from any large spinach leaves, and tear any very large leaves into smaller pieces.
3. Place the garlic in the mortar with a pinch of salt, then pound it with the pestle until it becomes a paste.
4. Add the lemon juice to the mortar, then stir in the olive oil and add some pepper, then whisk lightly to combine.
5. Tip the salad leaves into the bowl with the dressing, then gently turn them in the dressing with tongs or your hands.
6. Serve on platters and scatter with seeds, croutons or flower garnishes (if using).