

Our Favorite June Edible:

LINDEN FLOWER TEA

by Kelly Gibson

There's a week in early June when a walk down any city street is an intoxicating experience; the linden trees, planted along city parkways, are in bloom.

Linden flowers for just a few fleeting but glorious days and the trees are transformed from green to golden spheres so intense that they seem to diffuse the light. The blossoms release a gentle, euphoria-inducing fragrance; buzzing halos of honeybees attracted by the abundant nectar add to the drama.

For centuries, European cultures have savored this fragrance year 'round in the form of a *tisane* (herbal tea or infusion) made from linden flowers. During a conversation with friend Michael Thompson, Managing Director of Chicago's Honey-Coop, about a trip I took to France to study the production of linden flower tisanes, I discovered that lindens are also one of the most highly esteemed sources of honey, both here and abroad.

You can make your own linden tisane by **infusing six fresh linden blossoms** from a nearby tree. Harvest them by stripping the pale yellow tassel-shaped flowers along with the bracts (the newly formed modified leaves attached to the base of the flowers) from the end of the branch. Removing the blossoms won't hurt the tree - in fact, it serves as a gentle pruning, helping to retain the tree's characteristic heart shape. Rinse, then **steep the blossoms for 4-5 minutes** of water brought to just under a boil then enjoy as-is, or with a teaspoon of linden honey for a doubly fragrant and authentic taste of Chicago.