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BACKYARD NATURE

Writer tries cooking, eating insects



**TIM
 NOWICKI**

Have you ever tried eating insects? Other than the occasional one that you inhale accidentally, or the one that gets between the teeth of the happy Honda rider. We just might be missing something.

One of the most abundant sources of food during summer is insects. Summer is their season. They like the warmth of the long summer daylight periods and the lush green plants.

Numerous animals rely on this constant, abundant and reliable source of food. Many birds eat insects, like flycatchers, warblers and thrushes. In fact, typically seed eating birds like cardinals, feed their young nestlings insects because they are more nutritious. Insects as food is one reason migratory birds return from the tropics each spring. Less competition is another very good reason.

Mammals, like bats and shrews, will eat their share of insects. And lots of other insects eat insects — wasps and hornets are good examples.

Actually 80 percent of the world's human population eats insects. Europe

and America are the two major areas that do not eat insects. If so many people and animals eat insects, can they be that bad?

Well, recently I decided to try some insects as food to see what 80 percent of the world's population finds so appealing. I got some directions for preparing insects, and some recipes for cooking them from Dick Taylor, a retired entomologist. After looking through my choices, I decided to prepare some crickets and some mealworms.

Both these insects are available in pet stores so they were easy to obtain. Preparing them for cooking involved removing the legs, wings, antennae and

ovipositor on the crickets. This preparation was done after the crickets had been frozen. Nothing had to be done with the mealworms.

All the insects were washed and then roasted. Roasting until they were firm and almost crispy did not take long, probably less than ten minutes. Then I chose two methods of preparation, saute in garlic butter and dipped in chocolate. Both methods for both insects were very palatable, but my preference was the garlic butter technique.

Americans brought with them their aversion to eating insects, but if prepared properly they are not as distasteful as your imagination would think.

Iris from page 9D

at Oak Senior Center, 3500 Marais, near the intersection of 13 Mile and Crockett. Rhizomes are a bargain, priced at \$3 or less. For more information, call (810) 280-0848.

TIMELY GARDEN TIPS

Continue removing spent blooms of annuals to prolong their blooming period.

Be ready to pinch tips of leafy shoots to control growth, but not until after flowering.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

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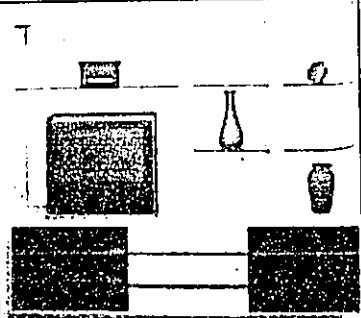
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