Red Radish Rosette

INGREDIENTS: Firm, room-temperature, large, tulip-shaped, red radishes.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES: Paring knife, cold water bath.

TIPS & TIMING: Use large, tulip-shaped or at least long radishes. Cutting time: about 5 minutes. Soaking time: 8 hours, or more. Make a few extras; not all radishes open equally well. Around my house I have to makes lots of extras—my wife eats them like popcorn!

USES: Vegetable flower arrangements, as a crudite and a plate garnish.
1. Slice off stem so radish rests on your board with its root standing straight up.
2. Using a gentle saw-cut, make a wedge from center of top, slicing 1 side of a V about 1/4-inch deep, then making an opposing cut, removing root in process. If your radish has a very long, tapering shape, cut a 1/2 - inch deep V.
4 You now cut "petals" under each peak. For a petal, insert your knife point about 1/8 inch directly beneath a red peak, and aiming in from 1 side of peak, just slice down side of radish, keeping knife point directly under red peak. The angle of blade is shallow. Don't aim your knife into center of radish. This would make a petal too thick to open up. As you near bottom withdraw your blade. This single cut makes 1/2 of 1 petal. Turn radish and re-insert tip of your knife so it intersects top of first cut. Draw blade straight down cutting opposite side of petal. The petal should be a bit loose to touch. If petal doesn't wiggle, then whittle it at its bottom to weaken it. Manually, bend each petal outward.
4. Repeat this petal-making step under each red peak. Leave a border of red skin around each petal. Soak in cold water for at least 8 hours, allowing petals to swell out from body of radish.