Rolled Vegetable Flowers

INGREDIENTS: Large, room temperature rutabaga, turnip or beet, 3 to 4 inches wide.
TOOLS & SUPPLIES: These flowers are made with very thin vegetable slices. Wash and trim ends from rutabaga, turnip and beet. Take these to a delicatessen or butcher and have them sliced into rounds thin enough to fold: over without cracking—almost as thin as a postcard. You'll pay a token fee to have this done, but it's just impossible to cut them by hand. A large turnip yields about 40 slices. Use 4 or 5 slices for 1 flower. You'll also need wooden picks and a cold water bath.
TIPS & TIMING: Each flower, once slicing is done, takes just a couple of minutes to fold. Don't delay folding them once slices have been made. Even when wrapped, slices soon become fragile. After folding flowers, give them 5 minutes in cold water to firm up. Then seal in plastic and refrigerate until needed. They won't turn brown.
USES: In vegetable flower arrangements or as platter center pieces (You can also do this with potatoes; deep-fry them and serve.)
1. You may make these flowers using just 1 vegetable or you can mix 2 or 3 in same flower. Roll first slice into a tight cylinder. The center of cylinder must be solid. The slice may crack at first. Just keep rolling, cracking will stop. Now roll a second slice around first. Don't line them up evenly. Let first cylinder stick out from second 1 2 inch. (You can substitute a thin carrot stick for first cylinder, if you wish.)

2. Holding rolled cylinder in 1 hand, wrap bottom half of another slice around it, letting top half of this new slice fall away from core. Overlap 2 sides of bottom of this new slice and manually hold it all together.

3. Add another slice to arrangement just under and/or opposite of preceding slice, letting more of this new slice fall away from central core. Now flower becomes difficult to handle. You can stop here or go on adding more slices. If you add more, lay next slice on from opposite side. (The potato flower looks best with 6 or 7 petals.)

4. Secure flowers with 2 or 3 wooden picks set through bottoms of petal" slices, passing through core and out other side. Crisscross picks without piercing the petals' edges. Set flower to soak in cold water. The petals will firm up in a few minutes. Place flowers in a plastic bag and refrigerate. Don't be concerned about wooden picks; they are snipped off with scissors before displaying flowers.

SALAMI FLOWER
You can make a flower out of salami slices too! Use hard salami and proceed as per rolled flower instructions. It's possible to use up to 10 of salami to create a striking accent to an antipasto platter.