

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL
HARVEST OF THE MONTH

COOKING THROUGH THE SEASONS WITH EARLY LEARNERS



GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS) is a non-profit organization in Newport, VT that strengthens local food systems by promoting positive economic and educational relationships between schools, farms, and communities. GMFTS supplies fresh, local food to schools and institutions and gives students of all ages the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy food choice through school gardens, farm-to-school programs, a regional food hub, and mobile learning kitchen. For more information, visit www.GreenMountainFarmtoSchool.org.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Green Mountain Farm-to-School's Farm-to-Preschool Curriculum Guide! Enclosed you will find lesson plans, recipes, and information about implementing farm-to-preschool programming at your early education center.

This program grew from collaboration between Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS) and NEKCA (Northeast Kingdom Community Action) Head Start. Since January 2014, GMFTS has been visiting local Head Start centers to lead monthly hands-on cooking activities for students.

The lesson plans in this guide are written to follow the Vermont Harvest of the Month calendar. Harvest of the Month is a statewide campaign to promote local food in the cafeteria, classroom, and community. While our lessons follow this program's calendar, you can implement lessons seasonally – for example, you can learn about November's harvest of the month, kale, anytime in fall or early winter.

Each lesson follows a similar format: an opening with a story and discussion about the featured harvest, an interactive cooking activity, and a supplemental art/educational activity related to the featured harvest. These activities emphasize concepts such as the lifecycle of a plant and the different plant parts we eat. The dishes that students help prepare are intended to be served during lunch or snack. Although students are more likely to try new foods after taking part in the preparation, it is important for teachers and adults to model positive eating habits. Seeing grown-ups eating cabbage will encourage children to do the same.

These activities are only a guide for bringing farm-to-school programming to your early education center. You may decide to lead all or part of the lessons, or modify them to meet your center's needs. For those looking to expand upon their program, we have provided additional suggestions for implementing farm-to-school activities.

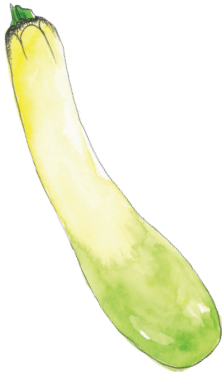
Enjoy, and happy cooking!

GMFTS Team

SUMMER SQUASH

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will learn about summer squash and how it starts from a seed and grows on a vine. They will learn how to make a tasty dish showcasing summer squash.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How does summer squash grow? What parts of the squash plant do we eat?

MATERIALS

Book: *The Surprise Garden*
by Zoe Hall

Physical examples of different
summer squash varieties

Images of summer squash
plant, including flowers
and vine

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE SURPRISE GARDEN

1. Gather students with calm bodies in a quiet circle. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about summer squash today. Ask if anyone has eaten summer squash or zucchini before. Explain that many people call squash a vegetable but it is actually a fruit.
2. Read the book. Ask students what happened in the book. Does anyone grow a garden at home? If so, what kinds of plants are in their garden?
3. Explain to students that every plant begins from a seed. Seeds can be found inside the fruit of summer squash plants. These fruits grow on a vine. Show students an image of a summer squash plant.
4. The fruit of the summer squash plant grows from a flower. Has anyone grown summer squash at home before? Show students an image of a summer squash flower.
5. Pass around one or multiple examples of summer squash. Encourage students to use their senses of sight and touch to explore the squash, and develop vocabulary to describe the squash. How does the texture feel? Is it heavy or light? What color is the squash, and what shape is it?
6. Tell students that we will be making a dish, featuring summer squash, to taste-test later today. Transition to hand washing.

MATERIALS

Bowls
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Whisk
Mixing spoon
Muffin tins
Ingredients
(see attached recipe)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – ZUCCHINI MUFFINS

1. After everyone has washed their hands, remind students that once their hands are clean we shouldn't touch our faces or hair because we can easily spread germs that way. Roll up any long sleeves.
2. Have each student sit down. Ask if they can remember what we are cooking with today-zucchini! We will be following a recipe to make zucchini muffins. A recipe tells us what ingredients to add, and how much.
3. With assistance from a grown-up, have students take turns measuring and adding ingredients to bowls, keeping wet and dry ingredients separate.
4. Demonstrate how to use a box grater, noting that we want to keep our fingers away from where the zucchini is being grated. Show when you want to stop grating to stay safe. Give each student an opportunity to grate zucchini. Add zucchini to wet ingredients.
5. After wet and dry ingredients have been combined, scoop batter into muffin tins and bake. Let cool slightly before enjoying.

HONEY & OLIVE OIL ZUCCHINI MUFFINS

Yield: approximately 15 full-sized muffins

Ingredients

3 cups grated zucchini
2 eggs, beaten
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup olive oil
(light or mild tasting)
2/3 cup maple syrup
1/3 cup honey
1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. In a mixing bowl, combine the zucchini, eggs, vanilla, olive oil, maple syrup, and honey. Stir gently until mixed; set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flours, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon. Stir to combine and make a well in the middle. Pour the wet mixture from step one into the well and stir just a few times until barely combined.
3. Pour the batter in a muffin tin greased with nonstick cooking spray or lined with paper cups. You should be able to get 6-8 jumbo muffins or 15-16 regular sized muffins. Bake for 20 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown and the tops spring back when you press on them.

MATERIALS

1-3 oversized zucchinis
or summer squash
(preferably those that are
too large to consume)

Cutting board

Knife
(for adult/educator use)

Newspaper or paper towels

Shallow bowls with water

Small envelopes
(one per child)

ACTIVITY 3: SUMMER SQUASH DISSECTION AND SEED SAVING

Educator Note: Before starting activity, cut squash in half lengthwise. Place each squash half on a cutting board or plate

1. After students have completed cooking activity and area has been cleaned up, transition into next activity. Ask students if they can remember what every plant/vegetable (including squash) comes from. A seed!
2. Divide students into a few small groups and place half of a squash in front of each group. Allow students to explore the squash using their senses – smell, touch, and sight (we will be using our tasting sense when we try the muffins we made!). Prompt students to describe the squash: Is it slimy? Soft? Hard? Does it have a smell?
3. After students have had sufficient time to observe the squash, explain that we will be doing something called “seed saving.” Can anyone guess what that means? We will be taking the seeds from our squash and drying them, so they can be planted at another time to grow more squash.
4. Demonstrate how to scoop or pick out seeds from the squash. We will gently place our seeds in the water-filled bowls to clean them.
5. Students can gently clean off seeds using the water, then transfer them to laid-out paper towels or newspaper to dry. Select a location that is dry and has consistent temperatures, as well as air flow. When seeds are brittle and hard, they are ready to be stored.
6. Students can color/decorate small envelopes to store seeds in – be sure to label your envelopes. Divide seeds among students, remember to seal envelopes. Keep seed packets in a cool, dark, dry spot over the winter and they will be ready to plant come spring!

BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will be introduced to broccoli and cauliflower and learn that the tastiest parts of these plants are the buds. They will learn how to prepare a dish using broccoli and/or cauliflower.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What part of the broccoli/cauliflower plant do we eat? How can we use it?

MATERIALS

Book:

Growing Vegetable Soup
by Lois Ehlert

Stalks of broccoli
and/or cauliflower

Images of broccoli
and/or cauliflower plant,
before and after flowering

ACTIVITY 1: STORY - GROWING VEGETABLE SOUP

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about broccoli and cauliflower today. Remind them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, tell students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then, the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Ask students what happened in the story. Did they recognize any of the plants in the book?
3. Show students an example of broccoli or cauliflower. Ask if any of them have seen these vegetables before. Have they tried broccoli or cauliflower? What did it taste like? Pass around the broccoli/cauliflower, and have students come up with words to describe how it looks and feels.
4. Tell students that the part of the broccoli/cauliflower plant that we eat is the bud. That's because this part of the plant will eventually turn into a flower! If able, show a picture of a broccoli/cauliflower plant that has gone to flower.
5. Remind the group that they will be cooking a dish with broccoli/cauliflower. Prepare to transition to the next activity.

MATERIALS

Mixing bowls
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Wooden spoons, for mixing
Cutting boards
Ingredients
(see attached recipe)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – BROCCOLI/CAULIFLOWER SLAW

1. Ask students what we should always do before cooking. The answer is: wash our hands! Have all students wash their hands, reminding them not to touch their mouths or faces once they have clean hands.
2. Divide students into two groups. Divide the recipe list in half, so that one group handles half of the ingredients and the other group handles the other half. That way each group can prepare the same thing. Explain that we will be taking turns measuring and adding ingredients. Pass around a mixing bowl, and help facilitate each student adding an ingredient for the dressing. While students are waiting for their turn, they can help break up heads of broccoli/cauliflower (provide large mixing bowl for slaw ingredients). Also have students add small scoops of sunflower seeds and raisins to slaw. Once the dressing is prepared, pour onto slaw ingredients. Pass around so each student gets to stir the slaw three times.
3. Refrigerate slaw, and remind students that it will be served at lunch. Encourage them to try what they made!

BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER SLAW

Yield: 6-12 servings

Slaw

2 heads broccoli or cauliflower
2 heads cabbage
1 cup sunflower seeds
2/3 cup dried cranberries
or raisins
2 cloves garlic
salt and pepper, to taste

Yogurt Ranch Dressing

1/2 cup + 2 Tbsp. nonfat plain yogurt
1/2 cup + 2 Tbsp. lowfat buttermilk
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 1/2 tsp. lemon juice
1 1/4 tsp. dijon mustard
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 Tbsp. finely chopped chives
salt and pepper, to taste

MATERIALS

Butcher paper

Crayons or colored pencils

Images or coloring sheets
of broccoli and cauliflower

ACTIVITY 3: BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER FOREST

1. Gather students in a group, and explain that we will be using broccoli and cauliflower to guide our own special story.
2. Ask what a piece of broccoli or cauliflower looks like – children should eventually arrive at comparing the florets to small trees. Roll out a sheet of butcher paper, which will serve as the canvas for your broccoli/cauliflower forest mural.
3. Either distribute pre-printed broccoli/cauliflower coloring sheets, or show students images as a reminder of what the florets look like. Have everyone color some images to be cut out and glued to the sheet, or draw them directly on the butcher paper. Once everyone has contributed, you should have a colorful broccoli/cauliflower forest.
4. Ask students what kinds of animals would live in a broccoli/cauliflower forest? Would other plants grow there? Encourage students to draw the wildlife of the broccoli/cauliflower forest on the mural. Write down ideas that are shared, and put together a short story about the magical forest.
5. Hang and display mural in classroom for the month, and share the image and story with families.

Educator Note: You may alternatively use cut pieces of broccoli and cauliflower as stamps. Dip the flat/cut side into washable paint, then press down firmly on paper to make a print.

KALE

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will understand the different vegetables and plant parts we eat. They will recognize kale as a leaf vegetable and learn how to prepare a dish using kale.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What part of the kale plant do we eat? What can we make using kale?

MATERIALS

Book: *The Vegetables We Eat*
by Gail Gibbons

Kale leaves

Images of kale plant

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE VEGETABLES WE EAT

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about kale today. Remind them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book – you can skip pages on soybeans and shipping/processing of vegetables. Ask students what images they saw in the book. Can they remember any of the vegetables shown in the story? Does anyone grow vegetables at home?
3. Show students a kale leaf. What part of vegetable do we think this is? (A leaf!) Compare the leaf to the image of a whole kale plant. Flip back to the leaves page in the book. Compare the kale leaf to the varieties of leaf vegetables pictured.
4. Ask if anyone has tried kale before. If so, what did it taste like? Did you eat it raw or cooked? Explain that we will be cooking with kale today, and prepare the group to transition to the next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls

Cutting boards

Measuring spoons

Baking sheet

Kale

Oil (preferably olive)

Salt/seasonings desired,
such as garlic powder,
red pepper flakes, etc.

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – KALE CHIPS

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces because we can easily spread germs that way.
2. Have each student sit down with a cutting board in front of them. This will be their workstation. Set a pre-washed piece of kale in front of each student. Explain that the full leaves are too large for us to eat, so we need to break them up into smaller pieces. Demonstrate how to tear the kale leaf, and the size that we want our pieces to be (slightly larger than a bite-size). Explain that we will only be eating the leaf and not the tough, center stem.
3. As students tear up leaves, collect the pieces in bowls. As the bowls fill up, drizzle the kale with oil. Allow students to help "massage" our kale leaves, coating them with the oil. This can be done by passing the bowls around the table or having students come up one at a time.
4. Spread out oil-coated kale pieces on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt or your seasonings of choice and bake at 350° until crisp (~10-15 minutes).

Ingredients

2 bunches of fresh kale

4 tsp. olive oil

salt, to taste

KALE CHIPS

Yield: 8-12 servings

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Wash kale and thoroughly dry it.
3. Remove kale leaves from stems and tear leaves into bite-sized pieces.
4. Place kale in a bowl. Add olive oil, and toss to fully coat leaves.
5. Spread coated leaves out on a cookie sheet, and sprinkle with salt.
6. Bake until edges are brown, but not burnt, about 10-15 minutes.

MATERIALS

Kale coloring sheets
(one per student)

Crayons or colored pencils

Scissors

Glue

Headbands/ strips of paper
(long enough to wrap around
a child's head – like a crown)

ACTIVITY 3: CREATING KALE CROWNS

Educator Note: You may either hand-draw kale leaves or find coloring images of kale online for this activity.

1. Explain that we will be making kale art. Pass out a coloring sheet for each student, and tell them that we will be using our colored kale leaves to make crowns!
2. Allow students to color in their kale leaf pictures. Although we typically think of kale as being green, there are also purple varieties. Let students be creative with the colors of their kale.
3. Cut out kale leaf images. This can be done by an adult helper or by students who are able to use scissors.
4. Staple each band of paper to fit the head of a student. Use glue to attach leaf images to the crowns. Allow glue to dry; then wear kale crowns to celebrate.

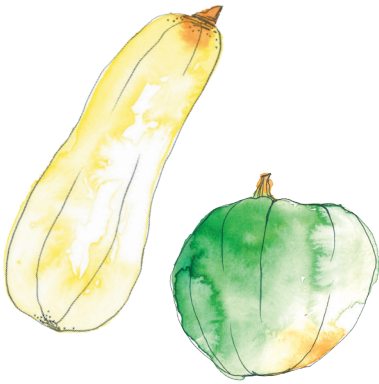


WINTER SQUASH

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY

Students will learn what a squash is and identify some varieties of winter squash. They will prepare and try a dish showcasing winter squash.



GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What is the life cycle of a winter squash?
What can we make with winter squash?

MATERIALS

Book: *Pumpkin Pumpkin*
by Jeanne Titherington

Pictures or physical examples
of winter squash varieties

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – PUMPKIN PUMPKIN

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about winter squash today. Remind them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Have students raise their hands to share something that happened in the book. How did the pumpkin plants begin? What happened after Jamie planted the seed?
3. Ask: Has anyone grown/carved/eaten pumpkin before? Did you know that pumpkin is a kind of winter squash?
4. Explain that winter squash are related to cucumbers, summer squash, and watermelon, but are able to grow into cooler seasons and can be stored over the winter. Pass around pictures or examples of squash. Encourage students to come up with words to describe how the squash looks.
5. Explain that we will be cooking winter squash and what the recipe will be. Remind students that they will have the opportunity to sample their dish at lunch. Prepare to transition to next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls

Cutting boards

Baking sheet

Winter squash, precut
into quarters or eighths

U-shaped peelers

Spoons

Measuring cups

Crinkle cutters

Oil (preferably olive)

Seasonings,
such as salt/pepper,
cinnamon, etc.

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – ROASTED SQUASH

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces because we can easily spread germs that way.

2. Have each student sit down with a cutting board in front of them. This will be their workstation.

Note: For an extended cooking activity, give each student a quarter or eighth of a squash to de-seed and peel. Demonstrate for students how to safely use U-shaped peelers: keep fingers away from blade of peeler, and firmly press down on vegetable, pulling away from your body to peel. You can also peel the squash in advance, if preferred.

3. Show students how to de-seed squash using spoons. Scoop out seeds and pulp from squash piece, using a metal spoon as a tool.

Note: The seeds and pulp can be set aside and used for the sensory exploration activity later in this lesson.

4. Have the educator or another adult helper chop the peeled and de-seeded squash into bite-sized chunks. Students can use crinkle cutters to help. Lay out squash pieces on a baking sheet.

5. Pour small amounts of oil into measuring cups and allow students to drizzle oil over squash. Measuring out small amounts of desired seasonings and have students sprinkle over squash.

Note: Roasted squash can be served on its own, or with other vegetables, incorporated into a soup, or pureed and integrated into macaroni and cheese. This decision can be made based on the desires of the teaching staff, cook, and/or students. If cooking soup or mac and cheese, students can help mix ingredients.

MATERIALS

Halved winter squash
Whole squash
Winter squash seeds
Pureed squash
Bowls
Cutting boards

ACTIVITY 3: WINTER SQUASH SENSORY EXPLORATION

1. In this activity students will move from one station to the next where they will use their senses to study a variety of cooked and raw squash parts.
2. Each station should encourage students to use a specific sense to explore a particular aspect of the squash. Here is a list of recommended stations:

Hearing: Encourage students to listen to the sounds produced by knocking on the squash. Ask what sort of noise it makes, or what it sounds like.

Sight: Present a halved squash as an opportunity for students to use their eyes to carefully examine the inside of a squash.

Touch: Allow students to use touch to explore raw seeds and pulp. Ask students what these squash parts feel like.

Smell: Invite students to engage their sense of smell by getting their noses very close to some pureed squash. This might be fun to touch.

Taste: Share roasted squash seeds with students so they can tell you if they like the way they taste. Ask them to describe the taste.

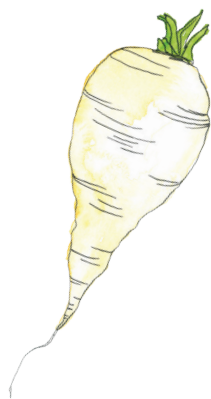
3. This activity has the potential to be very messy, so having a tarp or plastic tablecloth laid out over the activity area is recommended.
4. As students move through the activity stations, encourage them to develop language to describe their experiences. Consider guiding questions such as: Does the squash feel soft/mushy? What does the smell remind you of? What color is the squash? When you knock on the squash, does it sound hollow (empty) or not?
5. After every student has rotated through the stations, come together as a group, sitting in a circle. Ask students what they experienced, focusing on each of their five senses, perhaps one at a time. Encourage the sharing of descriptive vocabulary, and record the contributions of students. If the group has difficulty coming up with words to describe the squash, assist with guiding questions. How did it smell/feel/look/taste/sound? Consider color, texture, scent, temperature, and flavor.
6. Write down the words that students come up with to describe the squash and consider making a large display to hang in the classroom for that month.

Note: Don't throw away squash after this activity! Squash seeds can be roasted to eat, or dried and saved for planting. The insides of squash can be cubed or pureed and frozen for later use.

PARSNIPS

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will learn about parsnips and recognize that parsnips are root vegetables. They will engage in a hands-on cooking experience and try a dish showcasing parsnips.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What is a parsnip? What part of the plant do we eat?
How can we prepare it?

MATERIALS

Book: *Tops and Bottoms*
by Janet Stevens

Whole parsnip
for demonstration

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – TOPS AND BOTTOMS

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about parsnips today. Explain to them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Ask students who have a question or comment about the story to raise their hands, and call on them one at a time. Develop discussion by asking guiding questions: What were some of the plants that the hare grew? Do we always eat the top or bottom of a plant? What is your favorite vegetable? What part of the plant are you eating when you have your favorite vegetable?
3. Ask if anyone can remember what we will be cooking with today (parsnips!). Show students a whole parsnip, and pass it around so everyone can touch and see it up close. Does the shape of the parsnip remind them of any other vegetable? Explain that parsnips are related to carrots and parsley. Ask if the students think we should eat the bottom or top of the parsnip plant. Say that we eat the bottom, or root, of the parsnip plant. Parsnips like to grow in cool weather, so we can enjoy them into the winter here in Vermont!
4. Explain that we will be cooking parsnip chips that we will try at lunch today. Ask: Who likes chips? Has anyone tried parsnips chips before?
Prepare group to transition to next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls

Cutting boards

Baking sheet

Parsnips, pre-washed, halved lengthwise and tops removed

U-shaped peelers

Measuring cups

Oil (preferably olive)

Salt and pepper

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – BAKED PARSNIP CHIPS

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces because we can easily spread germs that way.
2. Have each student sit down with a cutting board in front of them. This will be their workstation. Demonstrate how to safely use U-shaped peelers to peel strips/chips of parsnip. Stabilize parsnip by placing the cut side down on the cutting board, and firmly peel away from yourself, keeping the blade of the peeler away from fingers.
3. Allow students to try peeling their own parsnips. Monitor to make sure everyone is using their peelers safely. Add peeled pieces into a bowl. Note: Considering peeling some parsnip in advance to save time.
4. Once every student has had the opportunity to try peeling parsnips, combine peeled parsnips into one or two large bowls. Drizzle with oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Have students toss the parsnip strips in the oil and seasonings, then spread in a single, even layer on a baking sheet.

BAKED PARSNIP CHIPS

Yield: 4 cups

Ingredients

1 lb parsnips

2 Tbsp. oil (olive or canola)

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Wash parsnips. Chop off tops and ends, and cut in half lengthwise.
3. Slice parsnips very thinly, lengthwise. A u-shaped peeler is a great way to do this. Cut long strips in half.
4. Toss in oil, salt, and pepper, and spread on a baking sheet.
5. Bake in preheated oven until the outside is crispy with brown edge, tossing occasionally, for 20-25 minutes. Serve immediately.

MATERIALS

Open space

Soft music, if desired

Picture of plant with clearly distinguishable parts (roots, stem, leaves, flowers, fruit, seed)

ACTIVITY 3: PLANT YOGA (PLOGA)

1. Gather students in a big circle in an open space, such as a large classroom. Make sure everyone has space between themselves and their neighbors.
2. Show students the plant part picture. There are six parts that a plant can have: Roots, stem, leaves, flowers, fruit, seed. Ask students if they can see these in the picture. Point out the six plant parts, noting that roots grow underground, and seeds grow inside of fruit.
3. Ask students which part of the parsnip plant do we eat – the root! Stretch down to your ankles/feet, and have students follow suit.
4. Stand up straight and gently twist from side to side. Explain that our legs and middle are like a plant's stem, helping keep us strong and tall. Instruct students to copy your movements, slowly twisting your middle and bending gently from side to side.
5. Outstretch your arms towards the ceiling/sky, and tell students to make their arms like leaves. Stretch your arms up and out, reaching for the sun just like plants do.
6. Tell students that we will pretend that our faces are flowers. Stretch your face as big as you can, widening your eyes and spreading your smile wide. Then make your face as small as you can, scrunching it up. Your face can grow from small to large, like flowers do.
7. Our next plant pose is fruit. Ask students what their favorite fruit is. Make your body look like that fruit. Some examples would be acting like a banana, stretching your entire body tall and thin; or like an apple, making a large circle with your arms around your body. Be creative and silly!
8. Finally we will be seeds. Gently and slowly drop down to the floor, and curl up into a ball. Have students do the same, so everyone has a quiet and calm body. After a few moments of rest, have everyone get up and shake out their bodies.

CABBAGE

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will understand the different vegetables and plant parts we eat. They will learn how to prepare a dish using cabbage.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What is cabbage? What can we make with it?

MATERIALS

Book: *Oliver's Vegetables*
by Vivian French

Picture or example of a
cabbage head

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – OLIVER'S VEGETABLES

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about cabbage today. Remind them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Ask students what happened in the book. Can they remember some of the vegetables that Oliver tried? Ask students if they have had any of those vegetables.
3. Show students the cabbage or image of cabbage. Pass it around, and explain that cabbage is related to kale and broccoli, two vegetables that we've already cooked with this year.
4. Ask: Have you tried cabbage before? If so, what did it taste like? Did you eat it raw or hot?

Explain that we will be cooking with cabbage today, and prepare the group to transition to the next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls
Cutting boards
Potato mashers
Crinkle cutters
Garlic press
Spatula
Large pan or stock pot
Baking sheet
Garlic press
Ingredients (see recipe)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – BUBBLE AND SQUEAK

Educator Note: It is easiest to pre-boil potatoes before cooking activity. Bacon can be substituted with ham or omitted from the recipe.

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces because we can easily spread germs that way.
2. Have each student sit down at the cooking table. Show students the tools that they will be using, primarily the crinkle cutters and garlic press. Demonstrate how to use them safely and what ingredients we will use these tools with.
3. Set up a few stations for students to shred cabbage. The shredding can be done by tearing up cabbage leaves by hand. One or two students can use crinkle cutters to chop onion. Also have garlic pressing station set up with garlic cloves and a garlic press. Remind students to peel the garlic before pressing.
4. Students can mash pre-cooked potatoes. Place potatoes in a large, stable bowl. Demonstrate how to mash potatoes using the masher, gently but firmly pressing down so as not to splatter potatoes.
5. An adult can melt butter in a pan or pot, and add the bacon. Add onion and garlic, and allow students to help stir. Add cabbage and cook, stirring occasionally, until it begins to cook down.
6. Transfer mixture to a large bowl, and combine with the mashed potatoes. Have students help in mixing ingredients. Move mixture to a baking sheet, and bake at 350° until slightly browned.
7. Remind students that they will be able to try their creation at lunch, but before that we will be able to further explore cabbage.

BUBBLE AND SQUEAK

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

1 lb cabbage, sliced, or leftover
boiled cabbage, shredded
1 lb cold crushed boiled potatoes
or cold leftover mashed potatoes
4 slices bacon, chopped
1 onion, finely sliced
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 Tbsp. butter

Directions

1. Melt the butter in a non-stick pan, allow it to get nice and hot, then add the bacon.
2. As the bacon begins to brown, add the onion and garlic.
3. Add the cabbage and let it brown slightly.
4. Add the potato. Work everything together in the pan and push it down so that the mixture covers the base of the pan. Allow the mixture to catch slightly on the base of the pan, before turning it over and doing the same again.
5. Transfer to a baking sheet, and bake until browned. Cut into wedges and serve warm.

MATERIALS

Cabbage,
whole and halved/quartered
Magnifying glasses
Bowl
Clipboards
Blank paper
Crayons and pencils
Kimchi or sauerkraut
Small cups for tasting

ACTIVITY 3: CABBAGE EXPLORATION

1. Set up stations for students to examine cabbage in various stages. Prepare a clipboard, piece of paper, and writing/coloring utensil for each student.
2. Begin with a whole cabbage. At this station, allow students to pick up and feel the cabbage head. Ask: Is it heavy? Soft? Hard?
3. Have students draw what they think the inside of the cabbage will look like. Ask students if they think it will be the same color as the outside.
4. At the next station, include halved or quartered cabbage. Students should feel the inside of the cabbage and think of descriptive words for the texture, and draw what it looks like. They may also peel back the layers of the cabbage and place them in the bowl.
5. For the final station, give students the opportunity to sample kimchi or sauerkraut. Divide into taste-test sized cups in advance. Have students sample the fermented cabbage, and describe the taste and texture.

Source: Growing Minds Farm to School program

BEETS & RUTABAGAS

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will be introduced to beets and rutabagas and understand that there are different varieties of beets and rutabagas. They will prepare a dish using these vegetables.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do beets and rutabagas grow? How can we cook them?

MATERIALS

Rah, Rah, Radishes!:
A Vegetable Chant
by Pulley Sayre

Examples or pictures of beets

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – RAH, RAH, RADISHES

Educator Note: If you can have examples of different varieties of beets (red, golden, Chioggia), cut those in half to show students that beets can vary in appearance. If you cannot obtain different kinds of beets, print off a picture to share.

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about beets today. Remind them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Initiate discussion about the book with open-ended questions: What were some of the vegetables in the story? Were there any that you hadn't heard of?
3. Ask students: Does anyone remember what vegetable we are learning about today? (beets!) Has anyone eaten a beet before? Do we know anything about beets?
4. Show students either a picture of beets or, if you have an example, pass it around.
5. Explain that the part of the beet that we eat is the root and that the root grows underground. Show a picture of beets in a garden, noting that we can only see the greens or tops of the beet. Beets are just like carrots in the way that they grow – both are root vegetables.
6. If you have a beet on hand, ask students what color they think it is on the inside. After everyone has had a chance to guess, halve a beet and show students the inside and its rich red/purple color.
7. Explain that not all beets look alike. If you have other varieties of beets, show students the inside of those. If not, show an image of those beet varieties.

MATERIALS

Mixing bowls
Measuring spoons
Wooden spoons, for mixing
Cutting boards
U-shaped peelers
Crinkle cutters
Ingredients
(see attached recipe)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – ROOT VEGETABLE FRIES

Educator Note: If working with a large group of children, consider splitting into two groups: one prepping the root veggie fries, and the other painting with beet juice, and switching half-way through the lesson period. Be sure to have an adult supervising each group.

1. Ask students what we should always do before cooking. Wash our hands! Have all students wash their hands, reminding them not to touch their mouths or faces once they have clean hands.
2. Set up work stations with cutting boards, peelers, and crinkle cutters. Demonstrate how to use each tool safely – peeling away from yourself, holding the crinkle cutter with both hands, and keeping the flat surface of the vegetable down on the cutting board. Allow students to both peel and chop vegetables, adding to a large mixing bowl.
3. When all of the vegetables have been cut, drizzle oil over the veggies and add minced garlic, salt, and pepper. Use a mixing spoon to coat vegetables with oil and seasonings. Pass the bowl around so each student is able to help.
4. Spread out the chopped and peeled vegetables in an even layer on a baking sheet and bake until crisp.

ROOT VEGETABLE FRIES

Yield: 8-12 servings

Ingredients

4 lbs of root vegetables –
beets, rutabaga, carrots,
potatoes, parsnips
4 Tbsp olive or canola oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425° F.
2. Scrub veggies – no need to peel them. Trim off any rough ends.
3. Cut vegetables into thin strips of uniform size.
4. In a bowl, combine oil and garlic.
5. Lay the veggie strips in a single layer on a sheet pan, and pour the oil mixture over vegetables. Toss to coat, and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
6. Bake for ~45 minutes or until tender and crispy. Toss at least once with a spatula to ensure even cooking.

MATERIALS

Cardstock

Paint brushes

Beet juice

Small bowls or cups

Smocks

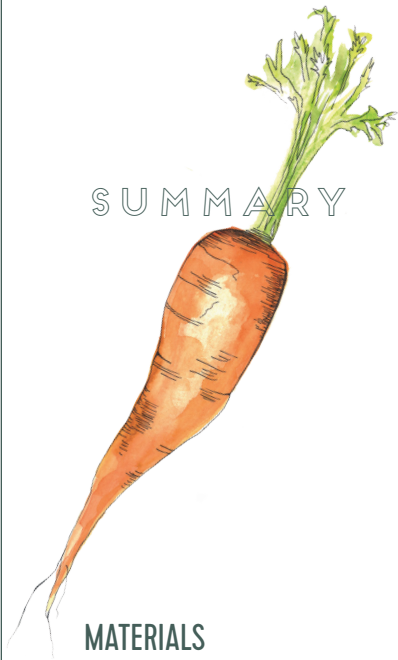
ACTIVITY 3: BEET JUICE PAINTING

1. For this activity, you will need to prepare beet juice/paint. There are a few ways to obtain this. One option is draining the liquid from a can of beets. Alternatively, you can peel and chop beets and boil the peels and ends in water until a rich-colored liquid is obtained. Adding a few drops of white vinegar will help bring out the color.
2. If the paint is used as is, it will have a watercolor-like consistency. You can thicken this by mixing in small amounts of corn starch or powdered sugar until a desired consistency is reached.
3. Set up a station for each student with a piece of cardstock, a smock, and a pencil. On the table place a container with beet paint and paintbrushes so students have enough to share.
4. Make sure students are wearing smocks and have sleeves rolled up, to avoid beet stains. Demonstrate how to use paintbrushes to create art on their papers, explaining that they may choose to draw a picture on their paper with a pencil before coloring with the paint.
5. Let students create beautiful beet art! Have extra pieces of cardstock on hand for especially creative students.



CARROTS

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL



SUMMARY

Students will understand the different vegetables and plant parts we eat. They will learn how to prepare a dish using carrots.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do carrots grow? What can we make with carrots?

MATERIALS

Book: *The Carrot Seed*
by Ruth Krauss

Picture or examples of carrots,
ideally including different
colored carrot varieties

Examples of carrot seeds

ACTIVITY I: STORY – THE CARROT SEED

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about carrots today. Remind them that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Ask students what happened in the book. Ask if anyone has planted a garden before. Ask if anyone has grown carrots or other types of plants. Explain that it takes time for a seed to grow into a plant. We can help by giving our seed water and warmth/sunlight.
3. Tell students that carrot seeds are especially tiny. Put a few seeds in a small cup or bowl and pass it around. Ask students if they can believe that a tiny carrot seed can turn into a big carrot.
4. Get students to talk about their experiences with carrots. Ask them: Who has eaten a carrot before? Did you enjoy it? What does a carrot taste like?
5. Tell children that carrots can grow to be different shapes and sizes, as well as different colors. Pass around examples of different colored carrots, or images of carrots. Ask students if they know what a root vegetable is. Explain that the part of the carrot we eat is the root, which grows below the ground. We have to pull it out of the soil before eating it!
6. Remind students that they will be making and trying a new recipe with carrots today. Prepare to transition to the next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls

Cutting boards

Y-shaped peelers

Crinkle cutters or chef's knife
(for adult/educator use)

Measuring cups

Measuring spoons

Whisk

Ingredients (see recipe)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – CARROT FRIES

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces because we can easily spread germs that way.
2. Have each student sit down at the cooking table. Tell children that we will be making carrot fries to try today – yum!
3. Divide students into two groups. Have one group peel carrots and chop off tops, while the other group mixes together coating. If possible, have an adult lead each group and have the groups switch stations part of the way through so each student can participate in both activities.
4. For students handling carrots:
Have a cutting board and peeler for each child. Demonstrate how to safely use the peeler, and allow them to peel off the outer layer of each carrot. Use crinkle cutters to chop off the tops and ends of carrots, if needed. Have an adult cut carrots lengthwise into “fries.” Consider preparing some fries in advance.
5. At the other station:
Have students help measure out the coating/seasoning ingredients for the carrot fries. Measure and add all ingredients to a large bowl, then whisk together until well-incorporated.
6. Add sliced carrot fries to the bowl and mix to combine. Students can help lay out fries on a baking sheet.

OVEN-BAKED CARROTS

Yield: 6-8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 ½ lbs carrots
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons rosemary,
finely chopped
- 1 pinch pepper

Directions

1. Heat oven to 425°F.
2. Line a shallow pan with foil.
3. Peel carrots. Cut in half widthwise, then cut lengthwise into sticks.
4. In a mixing bowl, combine carrot sticks, olive oil, honey, salt, rosemary, and pepper. Stir until carrots are evenly coated.
5. Place carrots in pan, spreading out as much as possible. Bake for 20 minutes or until carrots are tender.

Source: food.com, modified by GMFTS

MATERIALS

Large pieces of white paper,
one per student

Pencils

Black markers

Green and orange paint

Paintbrushes

Smocks

ACTIVITY 3: HANDPRINT CARROTS

1. Set up a station for each student with a piece of paper and pencil. Explain that we will be using our hands and arms to trace the outline of our own carrot picture, which we will color in with paint.
2. Demonstrate how to make the outline of a carrot by placing your non-dominant hand and lower arm (up to your elbow) flat on a piece of paper. Use a pencil to trace around your hand and arm. Your hand will be the top or greens of the carrot, while your arm is the root. Be sure to connect your carrot at the bottom! Students can use a black marker to retrace their pencil drawings.
3. Before painting, make sure children wear smocks to protect clothes from paint, and roll up any long sleeves. Show students an image of a carrot, reminding them that the top is green and the bottom is orange. Provide students with a small container of each color paint and paintbrush and facilitate coloring in their carrots. Allow to dry, then hang up pieces or send home with students.

Educator Note: Although we typically think of carrots as being orange, there are varieties of yellow and even purple carrots. Consider providing these colors for students to paint their carrot prints with.

Source: teachpreschool.org

MIXED GREENS

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will understand the different plant parts we eat. They will recognize some of the greens that we eat and how they are grown and integrated into a healthy diet

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What part of mixed greens do we eat?
How do seeds grow into plants?

MATERIALS

Book: *The Tiny Seed*
by Eric Carle

Picture or examples of carrots,
ideally including different
colored carrot varieties

Examples of carrot seeds

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE TINY SEED

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about greens today. Green is a color, but greens are also different types of leaves that we eat – like in salads. Remind students that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, remind students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book and ask students what happened in the book. Allow students to lead the discussion and voice their thoughts. Prompt with questions, if needed: Did all of the seeds end up growing into plants? What happened to some of those seeds?
3. Explain to students that every plant begins from a seed (this concept is introduced in earlier lessons as well). Once a seed grows into a plant, it grows different parts that we can eat. Ask students if they can remember any of the different plant parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds).
4. Tell students that today they will be learning about mixed greens and creating their own delicious salad to eat. When we eat greens we are eating the leaves of those plants.
5. Show students images of mixed greens varieties. Ask: Do they all look the same? What is similar about them? How are they different? Do you recognize any of these leaves from the salads or dishes you eat?
6. Tell students that we will begin making our salad soon. Transition to hand washing.

MATERIALS

Bowls

Measuring cups

Measuring spoons

Whisk

Salad dressing ingredients
(see below)

Salad ingredients – can be customized to your liking. (We recommend a variety of greens; veggies like peppers, radishes, carrots, or cucumbers; and flourishes like sunflower seeds, shoots, or sprouts.)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – GARDEN SALAD AND HOMEMADE DRESSING

Educator Note: Consider making two or three different dressings and have students taste test them at lunch. In this case, divide students into a number of groups equal to the number of dressings you will be making. If making one type of dressing, it may be beneficial to divide recipe in half and have two groups of students make halved recipes. See below for two of our favorite recipes.

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces or hair because we can easily spread germs that way. Roll up any long sleeves.
2. Have each student sit down and explain to them that we will be following a recipe to assemble our salad dressings. A recipe tells us what ingredients to add, and how much.
3. Read the recipe for your salad dressing to each group, then show them the ingredients and the measuring spoons and cups that will be used to make sure we have the right amount of each ingredient.
4. Allow each student to measure and add at least one ingredient to the dressing, trying to give each child an equal amount of work. When all of the components of the dressing have been added to the bowl, pass it around the group so every student is able to help mix it together with a whisk.
5. Extension: Students can also help assemble the salad. With clean hands, children can help tear large salad leaves into bite-sized pieces, grate carrots or cucumbers, and sprinkle seeds or sprouts into the salad. Be sure not to add dressing until ready to serve.

MAPLE BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

Dressing Yield: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

Ingredients

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
2 Tbsp. maple syrup
1 tsp. dijon mustard
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt and pepper

HONEY-DIJON VINAIGRETTE

Dressing Yield: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Ingredients

6 Tbsp. olive oil
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
2 tsp. honey
1 tsp. fresh grated ginger or $\frac{1}{3}$ tsp. dried ginger
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic
salt and pepper, to taste

MATERIALS

Potting soil

Shallow pan with drainage
(consider an empty
prepackaged lettuce/salad
container)

Plate or tray to catch excess
water from pan

Seeds – options include
mesclun mix, beets, arugula,
mustard greens, chard, kale

Spray bottle

ACTIVITY 3: GROWING MICROGREENS

Educator Tip: Before starting activity, prep planting container by poking drainage holes in the bottom (if necessary) and filling partially with potting soil. The soil doesn't have to be very deep. You may also consider transferring seeds from their envelopes to small Dixie cups so it is easy for students to sprinkle seeds.

1. Growing your own microgreens is a fun and easy activity that can take place in a sunny window. Explain to students that we will be growing our own micro (mini) greens that we can enjoy in a week or two. Prompt students to consider what a seed needs to grow into a plant. Answers include soil, water, sun/light, space, and time. Ask what we can do to help our seeds grow.
2. Show students the pan/container that the microgreens will be grown in (pre-filled with potting soil). Say that we will be sprinkling our seeds over the soil, and covering them with a light layer of the soil on top. We will place our container in a warm, sunny spot, and make sure that our seeds get a spray of water every day.
3. Pass around cups with seeds so students can observe them. Give each student a pinch of seeds and have them sprinkle their seeds over the soil one student at a time. Remind them that our seeds need space to grow, so if they are all planted in one spot they will be too crowded!
4. After every student has added their seeds, you or another adult will sprinkle a thin layer of soil on top of the seeds. Show students the spray bottle that will be used to water our seeds.
5. When the plants have sprouted and leaves have unfurled, cut right above the soil and enjoy! It will likely take 2-3 weeks for greens to be ready. Microgreens can be mixed in with salad, added to sandwiches, or incorporated into cooked dishes. The educator should spray soil so it is damp but not soggy and let students gently feel the soil. Each day, allow 1-3 students to help water the seeds.

HERBS

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will be introduced to one or more culinary herbs. They will understand why herbs are used in cooking (to add flavor, health benefits) and will help prepare and taste a dish featuring herbs.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What are herbs? What do they look, smell and taste like?
What can we make with them?

MATERIALS

Book:

The Yummy Alphabet Book
by Jerry Pallotta

Images or physical examples
of fresh herbs— consider basil,
parsley, dill, chives, or mint

ACTIVITY 1: THE YUMMY ALPHABET BOOK

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about and cooking with herbs today. Ask: Has anyone heard the word “herb” before? What do you think it means?
2. Explain that herbs are plants that can be used to add flavor to other foods. We often use the leaves of herb plants. Tell students that we will be reading a book that names some of the herbs that people use when cooking. We will then get to look at some of those herbs and prepare a dish that we will get to try at lunch.
3. Remind students to wait until the end of the book for questions and comments. Read the story and, depending on time available, consider only reading the pages highlighting the herbs that the children will be learning about that day. When you have finished reading, prompt conversation by asking students if they have heard of any of the ingredients you read about, or if they have tried any of them before. Allow for children to share their comments or questions.
4. Explain that the group will be making pasta salad with fresh herbs to try today. Introduce the herbs that you will be cooking with, preferably with a physical example of each variety. Allow students to pass around a leaf or branch for each herb, reminding them to use their senses of sight and smell to observe the different varieties.
5. After everyone has had any opportunity to observe the different herbs and ask any questions, prepare to transition to the next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls

Cutting boards

Measuring cups

Crinkle cutters

Kid-safe knives

Whisk

Ingredients (see recipe below)

ACTIVITY 2: HERBED PASTA SALAD

1. Ask students what we should do before cooking (wash our hands!). Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces because we can easily spread germs that way.
2. Explain that the group will be making pasta salad with our special ingredient of the day: herbs! Show students the varieties that they will be cooking with.
3. Consider dividing students into two groups. One group can put together dressing and tear up herbs, while the other can prepare vegetables. Have an adult oversee each group.
4. Students at the herb/dressing table can take turns measuring and adding dressing ingredients to a bowl, with the help of a grownup. Children who are waiting for their turn can use their hands to tear up herb leaves into smaller pieces.

HERBED PASTA SALAD

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ingredients

½ lb whole wheat pasta,
cooked and cooled

3 cups tomatoes and peppers

Chopped fresh herbs
(basil, parsley, dill,
and/or cilantro)

¾ cup olive oil

2/8 cup red or white wine
vinegar

1 tsp Dijon mustard

Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Cook pasta and set aside to cool.
2. Chop tomatoes and peppers into bite-sized pieces. Place in a large bowl with cooled pasta.
3. In a separate bowl, combine oil, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Mix well.
4. When ready to serve, pour dressing over pasta and veggies and mix to combine. Sprinkle herbs on top and stir gently.

MATERIALS

Fresh herbs, at least three varieties

Small bowls

Stickers or markers and large poster for voting

Optional: small pot or container, potting soil, and herb seeds

ACTIVITY 3: HERBS VARIETY TASTE TEST

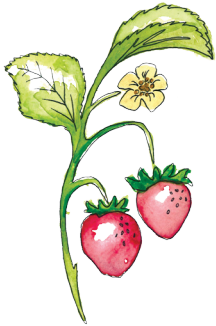
1. Herbs are added to dishes to boost flavor, and often a little goes a long way. Not only do fresh herbs bring flavor to dishes, but they often have distinct scents.
2. Tell students that we will be using our scent and taste senses to compare some different kinds of herbs.
3. Hand out to each student a small leaf or piece of one variety of an herb. Encourage students to use their sense of smell to observe and explore this herb. Does it smell sweet? Earthy?
4. Allow for students to share their comments and thoughts.
5. Encourage students who are interested in tasting that herb to take a bite, focusing on the distinct flavor of that herb. If any students do not want to try the herb, do not push them to do so. After they have tasted the herb, ask students who enjoyed it to raise their hands. Keep a tally of that number.
6. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for all varieties of herbs that you have. At the end, use stickers or markers to chart the voting results, noting which herb was the most popular.
7. **Extension:** Plant the most popular herb variety in a small container and place in the window of your classroom. Watch your herb plant grow!



BERRIES

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will understand where berries grow and how they are harvested. They will learn how to prepare a dish showcasing berries.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do berries grow? What can we make with berries?

MATERIALS

Book: *Blueberries for Sal*
by Robert McCloskey

Picture of berry bushes

Examples of berries:
blueberries, raspberries,
and/or strawberries

ACTIVITY 1: BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about berries today. Who has eaten berries before? Has anyone visited a berry farm?
2. Before beginning the story remind students that while the story is being read they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until we are finished reading. We will have time to ask questions or share ideas at the end.
3. Read the book. Ask questions to guide discussion about the story: Why were Little Sal and her mother picking berries? What happened to Sal and Little Bear?
4. Show students images of berry bushes, explaining that berries grow on these shrub-like plants. If anyone has gone berry picking before, ask them to explain what they did and how the farm looked.
5. Ask what kind of berries the book was about (blueberries). Explain that there are many kind of berries that grow here in Vermont. Ask students if they can think of any. Strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries are some other berries that we can pick and eat. Show students examples of berries.
6. Explain that our group will be making a dish with berries to try today. Prepare to transition to the next activity.

MATERIALS

Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Blender or food processor
Spatula
Cups
Ingredients (see below)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – BERRY SMOOTHIES

Educator Note: To keep every student engaged, we recommended making smoothies in batches with groups of 2-4 children. While one group is making their smoothies, have other students work on their berry finger-painting activity with the supervision of an adult.

1. Ask students what should be done before we begin cooking (wash our hands). Make sure every child has washed their hands with warm water and soap and then remind them that once their hands are clean they should try to not touch their face or hair.
2. Tell students that they will be making their own berry smoothies today. Ask if anyone has made smoothies before and, if so, what some of the ingredients were? Allow for children to share their comments.
3. Have ingredients ready to be added as well as measuring cups and spoons. Instruct each child to add one scoop of berries to the blender/food processor. Divide up ingredients so that each child has an opportunity to add something to the smoothies. Take turns blending the smoothies and stirring them in-between.
4. When all of the ingredients have been added and the desired consistency is reached, pour smoothies into cups so that each child has an equal portion to try.
5. If needed, rinse out the blender and repeat for remaining students.

VERY BERRY SMOOTHIES

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients

3 cups plain or vanilla yogurt
2 ½ cups berries,
fresh or frozen
¾ cup milk
¼ cup sunflower seeds
1 banana
1 ½ tsp lemon juice
Maple syrup, to taste

Directions

1. Measure and add ingredients to blender or food processor.
2. Blend until smooth consistency is reached. Add more milk or water to thin, if needed.

MATERIALS

Blank paper,
one piece per student
Crayons or colored pencils
Washable blue or red paint,
or washable stamp pads
Smocks
Paper towels
Pencils

ACTIVITY 3: BERRY FINGERPAINTING

1. Remind students of how berries grow on bushes. Explain that we will be making our own berry pictures, using our fingers to paint the berries.
2. Set up a station for each child with a large blank piece of paper and crayons or colored pencils. Add blue and/or red paint to a few trays or plates (children can share the paint) and have paper towels available for each student.
3. Make sure each student is wearing a smock before beginning the activity. Demonstrate dipping the pad of a finger into the paint, then pressing it onto a piece of paper to make a “berry.” Show that you do not need very much paint on your finger to make a round and colorful berry. Wipe excess paint off of finger using a paper towel.
4. Allow for students to make their own “berry art.” Encourage creativity and remind them that they can use crayons or markers to draw the entire berry bush, or maybe someone picking berries.
5. Be sure to write the name of the child on their art. Allow paint to dry and hang up for the month! Wash hands after fingerpainting.

Source: Delightful Learning

TOMATOES

FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM
GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM-TO-SCHOOL

SUMMARY



Students will recognize what a tomato is and that there are numerous varieties of tomatoes. They will learn how to prepare a dish showcasing tomatoes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What is a tomato? Do all tomatoes look and taste the same?
What can we make with tomatoes?

MATERIALS

Book: *I Will Never NOT EVER Eat a Tomato*
by Lauren Child

Examples of tomatoes
or images of tomato plants

ACTIVITY 1: I WILL NEVER NOT EVER EAT A TOMATO

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about tomatoes today. Ask if anyone has eaten a tomato before. Tomatoes are the main ingredient in pasta sauce and ketchup, so you may have had a tomato without even realizing it! Remind students that we will first listen to a story, then wash our hands and prepare food that we will try at lunch. Before beginning the story, tell students that while the story is being read, they should keep their thoughts or comments to themselves until the end. Then the group will have time to share.
2. Read the book. Ask students: What happened in the book? What were some of the foods that Lola did not want to eat? How did Charlie convince her to try them? Has anyone ever tried a new food before?
3. Show students either an example of a tomato or an image of a tomato plant and pass it around the group. Have students come up with words to describe the tomato. Ask students: What color is it? How does it feel? Does it have a smell? If anyone has eaten a tomato before, what did it taste like?
4. Tell students that they will be cooking with and tasting tomatoes today. Ask what we should do before we begin cooking (wash our hands!). Transition the group to washing hands and set up for the next activity.

MATERIALS

Bowls
Mixing spoon
Measuring spoons
Cutting boards
Butter knives
Crinkle cutters
Apple corers
Garlic press
Salsa ingredients
(see below)

ACTIVITY 2: COOKING ACTIVITY – FRESH SALSA

Educator Note: Although this recipe calls for chopping tomatoes, resulting in a chunky-style salsa, a portion of the tomato may also be pureed in a food processor to yield a smoother texture. Consider having students vote on if they want to make a smooth or chunky salsa, or make a small batch of both and have students compare the two.

1. Have everyone wash their hands, reminding students that once their hands are clean, we shouldn't touch our faces or hair because we can easily spread germs that way. Roll up any long sleeves.
2. Set up a table with cutting boards and tools, so each student or pair has their own station to work at. In advance, prep ingredients by cutting tomatoes and onion in half and peeling garlic and onion.
3. Tomatoes can be cut using butter knives or crinkle cutters, while an apple corer can be used to chop a halved onion. Students can tear cilantro into small pieces by using their hands. Demonstrate how to use each kitchen tool safely before distributing them to students.
4. Once all produce has been chopped, combine in a large mixing bowl and add lime juice, oil, salt, and pepper. Pass the mixing bowl around so each student has the opportunity to help stir the salsa.
5. If desired, students can also quarter tortillas and brush them with oil to be baked into fresh tortilla chips for dipping. This salsa would also be great served with bean and cheese quesadillas or tacos.

FRESH TOMATO SALSA

Yield: 8-12 servings

Ingredients

3 lbs fresh tomatoes
(~6 medium tomatoes)
4 cloves garlic
1 small onion
3 Tbsp. cilantro
2 Tbsp. lime juice or
white vinegar
1 tsp salt and pepper

Directions

1. Mince the tomatoes, garlic, onion, and cilantro, pureeing a portion of the tomatoes, if desired.
2. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
3. Let mixture stand for at least 20 minutes before serving.

MATERIALS

Paper and crayons
for each students

Variety of tomatoes
(heirloom, beefsteak,
Roma, cherry, etc.)

Cutting board

Knife

ACTIVITY 3: TOMATO OBSERVATIONS AND TASTE TEST

Educator Tip: Ask parents or community members to bring in tomatoes from their gardens, or visit your local community garden to observe growing tomatoes in action. You could also reach out to farms in your area to donate tomatoes if cost is a barrier.

1. Set up a station for each variety of tomato, including a whole tomato and a small bowl with taste-sized pieces of that tomato. Break up class into even groups with one group per tomato station.
2. Remind students of their five senses: Sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound. Ask them to use their touch and sight senses to observe the tomatoes and make a drawing of their tomato. At each station write down the words that students use to describe each variety of tomato. Allow them to taste test each tomato before rotating through to the next station.
3. After all groups have observed and tasted each tomato variety, gather as a whole group in a circle. Have time for students to share their thoughts. Encourage discussion by asking: Do you have a favorite tomato? What did all of the tomatoes have in common? How were they different?
4. Compile drawings and descriptive words and display them on a classroom wall for the month.

APPENDIX

EXPANDING YOUR FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

FARM FIELD TRIPS

In addition to monthly lessons and cooking activities, farm field trips are an excellent way to deepen the connection between what we eat and where it comes from. Visits to area farms allow students to see, first-hand, how the food that we consume every day is grown. During these field trips, students are able to meet and speak with farmers, explore the farm, and, perhaps, harvest some produce! No matter the season, there is sure to be an exciting and engaging learning opportunity on a nearby farm.

SPRING Spring is the season to plan a baby animals field trip! Check with your area farms to see when they are calving or lambing. Students will love meeting the newest members of the farm and may have the opportunity to help bottle-feed some of the babies. If visiting a diversified farm, you can visit with the other animals and see how the farmers are preparing for warmer months.

SUMMER Farms in Vermont are bursting with color and life over the summer months. If you have a year-round program, you have ample opportunity to visit local farms. One of our favorite summer farm field trip options is berry-picking. Strawberries have the earliest season, ripening between mid-June and mid-July. Raspberries and blueberries are available for picking later in the season, typically between July and August. Students can pick berries to take home, but it's also a great idea to pick some extra so that the group can have a berry parfait or smoothie-making day!

FALL Fall is a great time to visit either an apple orchard or pumpkin patch. Many orchards in Vermont are accustomed to hosting field trips for area schools and may already have educational activities available. September and early October are prime apple-picking time. Contact orchards early to schedule field trips while there are still low-hanging apples on the trees. Pumpkin picking is another fun fall activity. Check with local vegetable farms to see if any have a pumpkin patch that they're willing to let you visit. Students will love roaming around the patch and can participate in a follow-up pumpkin carving and seed-roasting activity.

WINTER Maple sugaring is the activity of choice for many Vermonters in late winter. Maple sugarhouses in your area may already be used to hosting field trips. Contact sugarhouses in late February to gauge when the sap will begin flowing. During a visit, students can take a walk among maple trees, watch sap being boiled down, and taste test maple treats.

EXPANDING YOUR FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL PROGRAM *(continued)*

FARM CORRESPONDENCE

You may be interested in establishing a relationship with a local farm for the school year. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) facilitates a pen-pal correspondence program over the winter months, connecting classes and farmers based on interest and grade level. Through this program, farmers also receive a small stipend for their participation. More information can be found at <http://nofavt.org/programs/farm-community-mentors>

If you already have a relationship with a farmer in your area, you may contact them directly about establishing a pen-pal relationship between your center and the farm. Your class can work together to come up with questions to ask your farmer friend and reply to their letters. Plan a field trip to the farm at the end of the year so students can finally meet “their” farmer.

SCHOOL GARDEN

If your preschool has the outdoor space, consider establishing your own garden. Installing a small raised bed near your playground provides opportunity for students to plant, grow, and harvest their own food. Check with parents and community members about getting donations for raised bed materials, including soil and compost.

Location of your raised bed or garden plot is important. Keep in mind accessibility for students and garden helpers, sunlight, and proximity to water access.

If your preschool is out for the summer, identify at least one community member (perhaps parents and children) to check on the garden throughout the summer. Although the purpose of a school garden has more to do with education and experience than production, maintenance and weeding over the summer is useful. Weeding early is much easier than when plants have grown large.

Weather is a factor that's out of our control, but planting a variety of crops helps ensure that there will be something to harvest come fall. When crops don't do well, it serves as a learning experience for both students and teachers. Seed packets contain all the information you need in terms of space and time needed for your seed to grow into a plant.

EXPANDING YOUR FARM-TO-PRESCHOOL PROGRAM *(continued)*

SCHOOL GARDEN *(continued)*

Some crops that we recommend for school gardens include:

KALE This hardy green can withstand cool weather, making it a great crop for harvesting late into the season. Leaves can be baked into chips, blended into a pesto sauce, or incorporated into a massaged kale salad.

DRY BEANS Beans are easily used for seed-saving activities. Bean teepees, constructed from large sticks/branches, also add height and visual appeal to a garden.

CARROTS These root veggies are fun for students to dig up and they come in a variety of interesting colors. Seeds can be sprinkled directly into a row and carrots thinned as they begin to grow larger.

PUMPKINS/WINTER SQUASH The seeds of these plants are large and easy for small hands to grasp and plant. It's exciting to watch squash grow and ripen and plants can yield a large harvest.

GARLIC While most crops are planted in late spring, garlic is planted in fall and cloves are easy for children to handle. Students will enjoy seeing the garlic growing up through the soil come spring and both scapes and bulbs are wonderful summer harvests.

RADISHES These slightly spicy roots are grown quickly. Ready to harvest only a few weeks after planting seeds, they can be enjoyed in a salad or with dip.

FLOWERS Flowers add color and texture to the garden. Nasturtium is an edible variety that students can try straight from the garden. Sunflowers have large, easy-to-plant seeds and can be used for seed saving in the fall.

The design of your garden and what goes into it is ultimately the decision of your preschool community. If you're hoping to incorporate produce from your garden into school meals, seek input from your kitchen staff. Students can also provide feedback on what they'd like to grow – consider presenting your class with a few options and have students vote on what they'd most like to see in the garden.

With enough preparation and support, a school garden can be a wonderful learning tool and resource for your early education center. Not ready to commit to your own garden? Consider connecting with a local community garden. Public parks, community centers, and local elementary schools are all sites that may potentially have a garden available for educational use. Contact the garden's coordinator and ask if there would be an opportunity for students to visit, tour, and help water/weed the garden. If you are able to get in touch before the planting season begins, ask if there would be potential for your center to "adopt" a bed in the garden to plant, maintain, and harvest.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

With thoughtfulness, organization, and preparation beforehand, cooking with students can be an engaging and meaningful experience. Although students in early education centers are young, they are more than capable of helping to prepare nutritious and flavorful dishes.

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

It is important to make hand-washing a routine practice when handling food. Before cooking with students, make sure that any long sleeves are rolled up, long hair tied back, and hands have been washed with warm, soapy water. Stress the importance of not touching your face, hair, etc. once hands are clean. If there is a slip-up, simply have the child re-wash their hands. Having adults model good hygiene practices is helpful in encouraging students to develop positive habits.

DEMONSTRATE

Before handing students any kitchen tools, it is essential to demonstrate how to safely use those tools or equipment. Model how students should grip a peeler, knife, or crinkle cutter, and be clear about any part that they cannot touch, such as the blade.

Only cut or peel ingredients on a cutting board and place your tool on the cutting board when you're done using it. If possible, have a flat edge of your vegetable that can be placed facedown on the cutting board. This provides stability and will keep your ingredients from rolling as you attempt to peel or cut them.

Use a claw-like grip, with fingers curled slightly under the object being cut, to hold food steady on the cutting board. With this technique, knuckles act as a "bumper" and help keep fingertips away from the blade of a knife.

KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED

With all children, and particularly our youngest friends, it is important to make sure that all students are occupied. We recommend a small child-to-adult ratio to ensure adequate supervision during cooking activities. With the lessons outlined in this curriculum guide, it would be possible to break each lesson into multiple stations and have groups of students rotate through those stations. Students will then be able to participate in every activity, while cutting down on any waiting time. Small groups are also easier to oversee, which makes cooking activities less stressful for adults and more engaging for students.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN *(continued)*

INVOLVE STUDENTS IN CLEAN-UP

Establish cleaning up after cooking as part of your regular taste test/nutrition lesson routines. It is important for students to understand that cleaning is part of the cooking process and that they can be helpful in wiping down tables or sweeping floors.

TASTING (THE BEST PART OF COOKING)

It is fun and exciting for students to taste the food that they helped prepare. Encourage and model the practice of trying new things, but be sure not to pressure or force children to try a new food.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT



Y-SHAPED VEGETABLE PEELER

These peelers are easy to grip for small hands, and can be used to peel a number of vegetables. Kuhn Rikon makes peelers with brightly-colored handles. Tell students to keep their hand on the colored portion of the peeler to avoid touching the blade/ cutting themselves.



CRINKLE CUTTER

For sturdier produce – such as carrots and potatoes – crinkle cutters are a great and easy tool to cut with. The wooden handles helps students remember what part of the crinkle cutter to grip, and the blade creates a fun edge on anything it cuts. Make sure that any produce being cut using this tool has a flat surface (which can be prepped by an adult in advance). Students will likely need to stand and use their body weight to cut with this utensil.



APPLE CORER

These tools can not only be used to core and slice apples, but are also useful for other fruits and vegetables. Cut an onion in half horizontally, and use a corer to chop onion into slices. Potatoes can also be halved and chopped using this tool.



POTATO MASHER

Mashers can be used on more than just potatoes. Pre-cooked parsnips, carrots, beans, and other produce can be crushed to a smooth texture using a masher. Remind students to hold the handle of the masher – and possibly have a partner hold the bowl containing your mashed veggies to keep it from moving around.



BOX GRATER

Carrots, parsnips, beets, and squash can easily be shredded by children (third grade and up) with a box grater. Demonstrate holding the grater with one hand, and using your dominant hand to pull the vegetable down the length of the grater blade. Tell students to stop shredding once the vegetable reaches a certain size to prevent accidentally nicking fingers.



FOOD PROCESSOR

For smoothies, dips, and sauces, food processors are a useful tool. Students can measure and add ingredients to the processor, and take turns turning on the appliance. Be sure to note that children should not use a food processor without the supervision of an adult, and always ensure the lid is secure before processing any ingredients. Food processors can also be used to quickly shred ingredients, with the proper attachment.



GARLIC PRESS

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