

BEETS

ACTIVITY PLAN



HARVEST for
HEALTHY
KIDS

Red • Chioggia • Golden (Orange)

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Circle Time

Use circle time activities to explore fruits and vegetables through read-aloud books and other activities. Read and discuss books, pass around and talk about the featured fruit or vegetable, show and discuss Harvest for Healthy Kids picture cards, play a paper bag guessing game, and more!

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★ READ ALOUD BOOK AND DISCUSSION

Vegetables

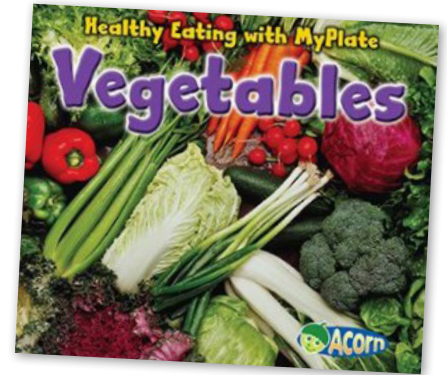
OBJECTIVES:

1. Children interact during a read-aloud and book conversation.
2. Children learn that a vegetable is a type of plant that we eat.
3. Children learn the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables.
4. Children learn that beets grow underground.
5. Children learn that trying new foods can be fun.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Book: *Vegetables* by Nancy Dickmann

Beets for children to touch, smell, and feel



WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Tell children: this month we will be learning about beets. Pass around beets so that children can touch, smell and feel the vegetables. Ask if anyone has tasted a beet. Ask children to describe how they ate it, and what it tasted like.
- Read *Vegetables*.
 - Identify the vegetables that grow above the ground and those that grow below the ground.
 - Point out the beets. Talk about their color. Talk about how beet roots grow underground, and beet leaves (or “greens”) grow above the ground.
- Talk to children about what makes fruits and vegetables part of a healthy diet. Talk about why it’s important to eat a “rainbow” of fruits and vegetables, because different colored vegetables have different vitamins and nutrients that make us strong.
- Ask children if they have a favorite fruit or vegetable.

VOCABULARY
vegetables
plant
beet
healthy eating



BOOK LIST

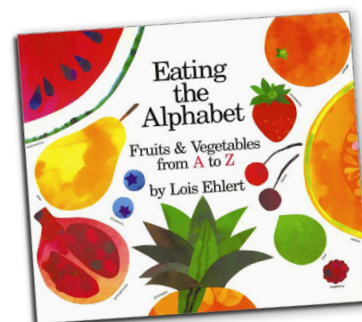
Move beyond the featured book! Here are some ideas for books to read during the beets month:

EATING THE ALPHABET

By: Lois Ehlert

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: apricots, artichokes, avocados, apples, asparagus, blueberries, brussel sprouts, beans, beets, broccoli, bananas, currants, cucumbers, corn, celery, cabbage, cherries, carrots, cauliflower, dates, endive, eggplants, figs, gooseberries, grapefruit, grapes, huckleberries, Indian corn, jalapenos, jicama, kumquat, kiwis, kohlrabi, lemons, leeks, lettuce, limes, melons, mangos, nectarines, okra, oranges, onions, pineapples, peaches, pears, papayas, persimmon, pomegranates, plums, parsnips, potatoes, peas, peppers, pumpkin, quince, raspberries, radishes, rutabagas, rhubarb, radicchio, swiss chard, spinach, star fruit, strawberries, tangerines, turnips, tomatoes, ugli fruit, vegetable marrow, watermelon, watercress, xigua, yams, zucchini

An alphabet board book full of fruits and vegetables from A to Z.

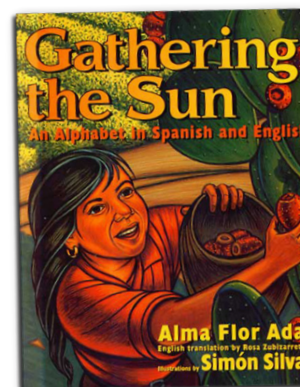


GATHERING THE SUN

By: Alma Flor Ada, Illustrator: Simon Silva

Fruits and Vegetables: carrot, beet

A beautifully illustrated alphabet book in Spanish and English. Each page has a poem in Spanish and English, celebrating fields and orchards, and the people who work them. A great book to teach children about farming and farmworkers.

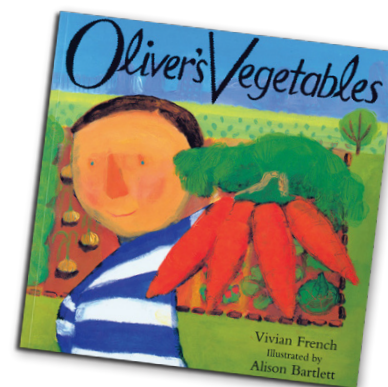


OLIVER'S VEGETABLES

By: Vivian French, Illustrator: Alison Bartlett

Fruits and Vegetables: carrots, spinach, rhubarb, cabbage, beets, peas, potatoes

Oliver is a little British boy who loves eating chips. When he visits his Grandfather, who has a large garden, Oliver is told he can look in the garden for potatoes, but he must eat whatever he finds! Throughout the week, Oliver tries new foods, from carrots, to rhubarb, to beets, and loves everything he tastes.





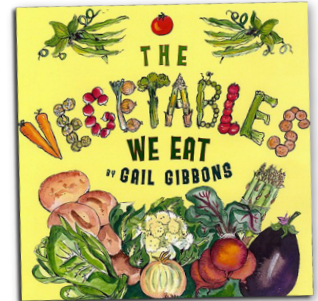
BOOK LIST

THE VEGETABLES WE EAT

By: Gail Gibbons

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: lettuce, cabbage, spinach, brussel sprouts, onion, scallions, leeks, cauliflower, artichoke, broccoli, beets, parsnips, carrots, radishes, rutabaga, turnips, potatoes, celery, asparagus, rhubarb, tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, hot peppers, yellow squash, winter squash, sweet peppers, zucchini, green beans, peas, corn, soybeans

A fun and informative book all about vegetables, how they are grown, and which parts we eat. A great book to show kids the difference between “leaf” vegetables, “bulbs,” “flower buds,” and more. Different sections of the book could be read to highlight different themes: how vegetables grow, what parts of vegetables we eat, how to grow your own vegetable garden, etc.

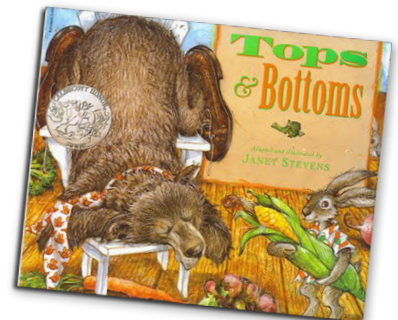


TOPS & BOTTOMS

By: Janet Stevens

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: carrots, radishes, beets, lettuce, broccoli, celery, corn

A story about a lazy bear and a clever hare who join together as business partners in farming. Each year, Bear chooses “tops” or “bottoms” while Hare does all the work, but Hare makes sure to plant the best vegetables on his side of the dirt!



VEGETABLES

By: Sara Anderson

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: celery, rhubarb, cucumbers, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, artichoke, turnips, carrots, peas, onion, eggplant, pumpkins, asparagus, lettuce, zucchini, beets, broccoli, spinach, corn, green beans, radishes, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, cabbage

Book features rhyming text and illustrations of brightly colored vegetables.

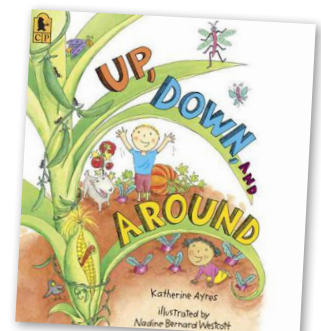


UP, DOWN, AND AROUND

By: Katherine Ayres, Illustrator: Nadine Bernard Westcott

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: beets, pumpkins, broccoli, tomatoes, corn, green beans, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, okra, onion, carrots

This fun, rhyming story tells the tale of how vegetables grow (broccoli grows up/beets grow down/green beans climb around and around). Children will love the bright, realistic illustrations, and the lilting rhymes.





MORE IDEAS

“B” IS FOR BEETS

Talk with children about how beet starts with the letter “B.” Explain that beet roots grow under the ground. Beet leaves grow above the ground. Ask children to come up with other words that start with “B,” and record their ideas on a large piece of butcher paper or construction paper. Hang the chart paper in the classroom for the month.



TASTE AND TELL

Gather children in circle time and offer tastes of raw and cooked beet. Ask questions like: What do beets taste like? How do the beets taste the same or different? Are raw beets different than cooked beets? Do the children like the taste? Offer tastes of different colors of beets (red, orange, striped). Ask children to predict what each color will taste like. Record children’s responses on a chart, and hang it in the classroom.

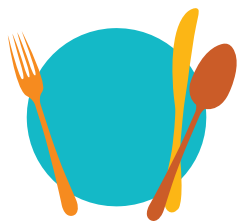
PAPER BAG GUESSING GAME OR SURPRISE BOX

Place a beet or a handful of beets in a paper bag. Invite children to reach their hands in the bag and describe the feel and shape of the beet. Pull out the vegetables and ask children to describe their size, shape, and color. Alternatively, use a cardboard box or small shoebox for this activity. Cut out a hole large enough to fit small and big arms through.



PICTURE CARDS

The Harvest for Healthy Kids picture cards can be used any time during the month in which the fruit/vegetable is featured. Picture cards come in three categories: Fruit and Veggie Photo Cards, How Does It Grow? (botanical illustrations of fruit and vegetables), and Same but Different (vegetables/fruits in different colors, or different varieties of a vegetable/fruit). Find ideas for how to use these cards in the Harvest for Healthy Kids Teacher Bites, and on the back of each picture card.



Meal Time

Meal time is a great time to talk about fruits and vegetables, especially when a Harvest for Healthy Kids fruit or vegetable is being served! Use meal time to review something the children learned (e.g. that beets grow under the ground). You can also use hand stamps during meal time to congratulate children who “tried something new today!”

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MEAL TIME IDEAS

PLEASE PASS THE VEGGIES!

Children may be more likely to try new fruits and vegetables if they can touch and see the fruit or vegetable before it is cooked. When beets are served, try to have a few raw, whole beets on hand to pass around the tables. Talk with children about how whole vegetables like these were cut up and cooked by the cooks, so that children and teachers can have delicious, healthy food to eat!



TABLE TALK

When children are trying beets during meal time, ask them questions, like:

- What do they taste like? Are they soft? Smooth? Crunchy? Sweet? Salty?
- Does anyone have a garden? What do you grow in your garden?
- Has anyone tried to grow beets?
- How do beets grow? (The roots grow underground, the leaves grow above the ground.)
- What part of beets do we eat? (We can eat the roots and the leaves.)

“B” IS FOR BEETS

Talk with children about how beet starts with the letter “B.” Beet roots grow under the ground. Beet leaves grow above the ground. Ask children to come up with other words that start with “B,” as you eat together.





Activity Time

Activity Time (e.g. “free choice” in Head Start centers, or full group activities) is a perfect time to introduce more activities like cooking projects and sensory explorations of fruits and vegetables.

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SENSORY EXPLORATION Colorful Beets, Inside and Out

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children describe the smell, feel, and color of beets.
2. Children use scientific inquiry skills to predict, observe, describe and compare beets.
3. Children learn that beets can have a different color or pattern on the inside versus on the outside.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Beets of assorted colors – red, orange, white. Try to include chioggia beets, which are striped inside. You can find these at most farmers markets when beets are in season (June-January). Include a mix of raw and cooked beets (steam, boil, or microwave, and let cool).

Plastic coverings for tables

Aprons or plastic garbage bags with holes cut out for head and arms

Lemons to help clean beet stains off hands

Plastic knives for children

Paper for beet stamping

Chart paper

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Tell the children that today we will be exploring beets, and children will have the chance to explore how this root feels, tastes, and smells.
- Ask children to put on aprons and explain that beet juice will stain clothing, so it is important to explore the beets on the table.
- Remind the children that vegetables grow above the ground and below the ground, and ask children: Do beet roots grow above the ground or below the ground? (Answer: the roots grow below the ground.)
- Talk about places you can find beets (on a farm, in a farmer's market, at a supermarket).
- Show children the different colors of beets. Have children guess what color the inside of the beet will be, and cut it open to reveal the color (this will be especially fun with the chioggia beets). Record children's predictions.
- Let children explore beets with cooking tools available.
- Talk with children about what they are seeing, smelling, and feeling. What words describe the feel of beets (hard, rough, smooth, slippery)? What does a beet smell like (sweet, salty)? How do cooked beets look, smell, and feel differently than raw beets? Do the different colors smell or feel differently?
- Help children wash hands, using lemon juice if needed. Explain that lemon can help remove the beet stains on their fingers.



BEET STAMPING

Red beets can stain hands, faces, clothing...and paper! It's no wonder they have been used as a natural clothing dye. Make use of this fun characteristic in a stamping activity. Supply children with paper and pieces of beet (cubes, grated, etc.). Stamp away!





★ COOKING ACTIVITY AND TASTING

Rainbow Crunch Salad

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children participate in cooking activity and learn how to make rainbow crunch salad (carrot and beet salad with lemon ginger dressing).
2. Children learn some different ways that beets can be eaten (raw, cooked, grated, diced, pickled, in soup, salads, other recipes).
3. Children taste grated beets plain and in dressed salad.
4. Children practice motor skills and coordination when preparing and combining ingredients.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Ingredients for recipe (**next page**)

Grater, whisk or fork for whisking dressing, cutting board

Medium-large bowl for salad

Raw whole beet for showing the class

Small bowls for children to mix a portion of the salad

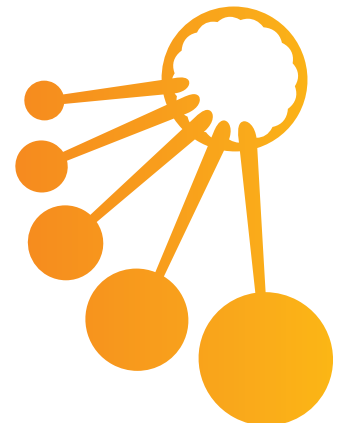
WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Tell children that today they will be helping to make Rainbow Crunch Salad, a delicious vegetable dish with carrots and beets.
- Introduce each ingredient as you place it on the activity table.
- Show children raw whole beet and raw grated beet. Offer tastes of the grated beet if children would like to try. Remind children that they will need to wash their hands again after having a taste and before participating in the activity. Remind children that beets can stain hands and clothing, so it is important to not touch clothing while cooking with beets, and to keep them on the table.
- Children can help squeeze the lemon and orange into the bowl.
- Children can help add honey/brown sugar and ginger to the juice.
- Children can help grate vegetables if supervised and supported by an adult.
- Children can mix their own small salads: Offer each child a bowl with a small amount of dressing. Ask each child to take a small handful of carrots and use hands to mix it in the bowl with the dressing. Next, have each student take a small handful of grated beets and lightly mix it in the bowl. Demonstrate light mixing for the children before they try.
- This activity can be done with small groups. Invite a small group of children (5-8) to participate at a time. While each group is participating in the cooking activities, other children can be participating in regular activities (playdough, reading, coloring) or in beet-related activities (more sensory exploration, looking at food and garden books, practicing writing “beet,” or other science and math related activities suggested on the “extras” page).
- You can also break up this activity to do over multiple days. Bring extra lemons, oranges, and ginger. Invite children to explore the smells and tastes of the citrus and ginger. Ask children to help squeeze the citrus, and mix the dressing. Reserve the dressing in the refrigerator. On the second day, grate the vegetables and assemble the salad.
- As always, remember to keep children away from all sharp cutting utensils, electrical devices, and hot food and surfaces at all times.



A RAINBOW OF TASTES

Bring different colored beets to use in the salad, such as red beets, orange beets, and striped beets (Chioggia). Ask children to predict how the differently colored beets will taste. Record children's predictions. Offer tastes of raw (grated or thinly sliced) or cooked (cubed) beets. Ask children: what do they taste like? Do you like the taste? Are they soft? Crunchy? Do the differently colored beets taste the same or different?





COOKING ACTIVITY AND TASTING

Rainbow Crunch Salad

RAINBOW CRUNCH SALAD

About 20 small tastes

Adapted from Alison Forrest, Food Service Director, Huntington, VT

INGREDIENTS

Dressing:

- 1/4 tsp. grated fresh ginger*
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- Juice of 1 large lemon (2-3 Tbs.)
- Juice of 1/2 large orange (2-3 Tbs.)
- 1/8 tsp. salt

Vegetables:

- 3/4 pound carrots, grated*
- 3/4 pound raw beets (mix of colors, if possible), grated*

*To save time, the majority of carrots and beets can be grated before doing the cooking activity. Teachers can leave a couple of beets and/or carrots to grate with the class, and involve the children in the grating if possible. Ginger can be grated beforehand or left for the teacher to do during the activity.

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash and peel beets and carrots, peel ginger
2. Grate carrots, beets and ginger and set aside
3. Juice 1 large lemon and 1/2 orange into a bowl
4. Whisk in honey and ginger
5. Add carrots to the dressing and mix well
6. Add beets and mix lightly
7. Refrigerate salad until ready to serve



★ HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS RECIPE BOOK

Have children decorate and put together a recipe book throughout the year, including each month's cooking activity recipe!

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children create a drawing to accompany the Rainbow Crunch Salad recipe, and use crayons, markers or paint to create art.
2. Children tell the class about their artwork.
3. Children remember and connect learning experiences about beets, and recall what they have learned during the month.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Printed copies of family versions of recipes for each child; recipe on ½ of page (8 ½ x 11)

Crayons, markers, paint, magazines with fruits and vegetables, crayons, scissors, glue

Beet roots, for display

Family Recipe: Rainbow Crunch Salad **(page 15)**



HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS RECIPE BOOK:

Start this activity in the beginning of the year. Have each child decorate a cover for his or her fruit & veggie cookbook. Bind each child's book with enough pages for a recipe and picture for each month (8 months). Have children take the recipe book home with the welcome newsletter. Then, each month, using the recipe decorating activity to add recipes to the recipe books! Children can take home their decorated recipe with a monthly newsletter, or just pinned to their bags or clothing!



Family Recipe

RAINBOW CRUNCH SALAD (Beet and Carrot Salad with Citrus Dressing)

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

Dressing:

1/4 tsp. grated fresh ginger, grated

1 Tbsp. honey or brown sugar

Juice of 1 large lemon (2-3 Tbs.)

Juice of 1/2 large orange (2-3 Tbs.)

1/4 tsp. salt or to taste

Vegetables:

3/4 pound carrots (mix of colors, if possible), grated

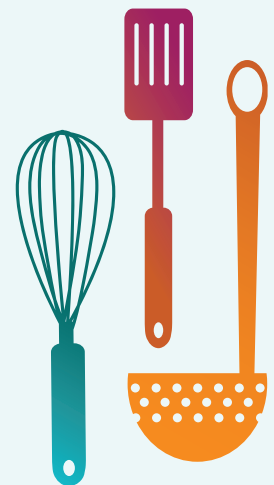
3/4 pound raw beets, grated

DIRECTIONS

Make dressing: Measure lemon and orange juices into a medium bowl. Add grated ginger and honey/brown sugar and whisk to combine. Add 1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste.

Make salad: Add grated carrots to the bowl and stir to combine. Add beets and mix lightly. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

** Adapted from Alison Forrest, Food Service Director, Huntington, VT*





★ CREATIVE ARTS

Watch our Garden Grow

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children learn that we can grow beets in a garden.
2. Children review how beets grow.
3. Children make their own beet to display in the classroom “garden.”

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Small paper plates
Colored paper, yarn, paint, or other art supplies
Scissors
Glue



WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Make a beet using a paper plate and colored paper. Create the beet root on the paper plate, and paste green strips to the plate as the beet greens. Use this plate as an example to show the class.
- Tell children: we can grow beets in a garden. Ask children if anyone has ever grown beets in a garden.
- Ask children to remember how beets grow (the roots grow underground; the leaves grow above the ground).
- Show children example plate and tell children: today we will be making beets for our “class garden.”
- Provide children with plates, colored paper, scissors, and glue.
- Invite children to make their own beet for the “class garden.”
- Designate a space on a wall in the classroom for the “class garden.” Add to the wall each month with children’s colorful creations of the featured fruits and vegetables in the Harvest for Healthy Kids program.



Fast and Fun

Beyond circle time, meal time, and activity time, there are other simple ways to highlight the Harvest for Healthy Kids program, and teach children about fruits and vegetables. Take a look at the ideas below for easy ways to have fun with Harvest for Healthy Kids throughout the day.

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FAST AND FUN

PUPPETS

If you have puppets in the classroom, bring them into your Harvest for Healthy Kids activities! Try having a puppet introduce the featured fruit or vegetable at the beginning of the month. Puppets might also be used to introduce ingredients for a cooking activity, or during other activities.

HAND STAMPS

Use your favorite hand stamps or stickers to acknowledge children's participation in Harvest for Healthy Kids activities (e.g. cooking, sensory exploration, planting, reading) throughout the month.

DISCOVERY TABLE

Use the “discovery table” or another area of the classroom to explore different activities on a farm. Put out soil and various garden tools, such as rakes, hoes, and small shovels and spades. Include seeds and a small watering can. Allow children to explore the soil and use the tools, while practicing different jobs on a farm. This can be a great activity for children if you plan to have (or already have) a school garden at your center.

TASTING CHART

Create a chart with children's names on the left side in rows and the featured fruit and vegetable names on the top in columns. Each month, give children a stamp or sticker in the fruit/vegetable box next to their name if they tasted the fruit or vegetable anytime during the month. Hang the tasting chart in the classroom.

SING-ALONG

If you're hungry and you know it (eat a beet) – to the tune of “If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands”

If you're hungry and you know it, eat a beet!

If you're hungry and you know it, eat a beet!

Beets are red, orange and striped; open wide, and take a bite!

If you're hungry and you know it, eat a beet!



ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children in early care and education settings to a wide variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family engagement activities support parents in promoting healthy eating habits at home. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and Early Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.