

Farm to Preschool  
Harvest of the Month Curriculum

# Cooking Through the Seasons with Early Learners



Green Mountain Farm-to-School





## Table of Contents

Introduction

Lessons

Summer Squash

Broccoli and Cauliflower

Kale

Winter Squash

Parsnips

Cabbage

Beets and Rutabagas

Carrots

Mixed Greens

Herbs

Berries

Tomatoes

Additional Resources

Expanding your Farm to Preschool Program

Cooking with Children



## 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 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: 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 understand the different plant parts we eat. They will recognize examples of summer squash, and learn how they grow on a plant. They will learn how to make a tasty dish showcasing summer squash.

**Guiding Questions:** How does summer squash grow? What part of the squash plant do we eat?

---

## Activity 1: Story- *The Surprise Garden*

### Materials:

- *The Surprise Garden* by Zoe Hall
- Physical examples of different summer squash varieties
- Images of summer squash plant- including flowers and vine

1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about summer squash today. *Has anyone eaten summer squash or zucchini before? 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Zucchini Muffins

### Materials:

- Bowls
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Whisk
- Mixing spoon
- Muffin tins
- Ingredients

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 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, and 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 and 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

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. 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.

## Activity 3: Summer Squash Dissection and Seed Saving

### Materials:

- 1-3 oversized zucchinis/ 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)

**Educator Tip:** 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 a half of a squash in front of each group. Allow students to explore the squash using their senses- smell, touch, 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!*
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 and Cauliflower

## 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 broccoli and/or cauliflower.

**Guiding Questions:** What part of a plant is broccoli/cauliflower? How can we use it?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *Growing Vegetable Soup*

#### Materials:

- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert
- Stalks of broccoli and/or cauliflower
- Images of broccoli/ cauliflower plant, before and after flowering

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- it eventually flowers!* 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Broccoli/Cauliflower Slaw

### Materials:

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

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. Cut taste test recipe in half, so 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 three stirs of slaw.
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 head broccoli or cauliflower  
2 head cabbage  
1 cup sunflower seeds  
2/3 cup dried cranberries or raisins  
2 cloves garlic  
salt and pepper, to taste

#### Yogurt Ranch Dressing:

##### Ingredients:

½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. nonfat plain yogurt  
½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. lowfat buttermilk  
¼ cup mayonnaise  
1 ½ tsp. lemon juice  
1 ¼ tsp. dijon mustard  
½ tsp. onion powder  
½ tsp. garlic powder

1 Tbsp. finely chopped chives  
salt and pepper, to taste

## Activity 3: Broccoli and Cauliflower Forest

### Materials:

- Butcher paper
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Images or coloring sheets of broccoli and cauliflower

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 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 a plant is kale? What can we make using kale?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *The Vegetables We Eat*

#### Materials:

- *The Vegetables We Eat* by Gail Gibbons
- Kale leaves
- Images of kale plant

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 kind of vegetable do we think this is? (A leaf!)* Compare 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Kale Chips

### Materials:

- Bowls
  - Cutting boards
  - Measuring spoons
  - Baking sheet
  - Kale
  - Oil (preferably olive)
  - Salt/ seasonings desired, such as garlic powder, red pepper flakes, etc.
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 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).

Kale Chips  
Yield: 8-12 servings

Ingredients:  
2 bunches of fresh kale  
4 tsp. olive oil  
salt, to taste

- 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.

## Activity 3: Creating Kale Crowns

### Materials:

- Kale coloring sheets (one per student)
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Bands/ strips of paper- long enough to wrap around a child's head (like a crown)

**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 it?

---

## Activity 1: Story- *Pumpkin Pumpkin*

### Materials:

- *Pumpkin Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington
- Pictures or physical examples of winter squash varieties

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 if anyone has grown/carved/eaten pumpkin before. *Did you know that pumpkin is a kind of winter squash?* 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.
4. 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Roasted Squash

### 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.

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 it's on 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.

## Activity 3: Winter Squash Sensory Exploration

### Materials:

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

1. Winter squash is a wonderful crop to use for a sensory activity. Prepare squash in advance to set up stations with a variety of cooked and raw squash. Some examples include half a squash, roasted seeds, raw seeds and pulp, pureed squash, and a whole squash. Encourage students to use their senses to study the various forms and parts of squash. **Note:** If including a “taste” component of the sensory exploration activity, be sure to designate what part of the activity is to be tasted (such as putting roasted seeds in small cups).
2. This activity has potential to be very messy, so having a tarp or plastic tablecloth laid out over activity area is recommended. Ideas for stations include: raw seeds and pulp for touch, whole squash for sound (*when we knock on the squash, what noise does it make?*), halved squash for sight, pureed squash for scent/touch, and roasted seeds for taste.
3. As students move through activity stations, encourage them to develop language to describe their experience. Consider guiding questions, such as: *Does the squash feel soft/mushy? What does that smell remind you of? What color is the squash? When you knock on the squash, does it sound hollow (empty) or not?*
4. After every student has rotated through the stations, come together as a group, sitting in a circle. Ask students what they experienced, focusing on their five senses. Encourage the sharing of descriptive vocabulary, and record the contribution 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?* Consider color, texture, scent, temperature.
5. Write down the words that students came 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 what about plant parts we eat, and recognize that parsnips are a root. 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?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *Tops and Bottoms*

#### Materials:

- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
  - Whole parsnip for demonstration
1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about parsnips 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 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 everyone's 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 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 be able to try at lunch today. *Who likes chips? Has anyone tried parsnips chips before?* Prepare group to transition to next activity.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Baked Parsnip Chips

### 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

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 (oil or canola)
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350<sup>o</sup> 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.

## Activity 3: Plant Yoga (PLOGA)

### Materials:

- Open space
  - Soft music, if desired
  - Picture of plant with clearly distinguishable parts (roots, stem, leaves, flowers, fruit, seed)
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 neighbor.
  2. Show students the plant part picture. *There are six parts that a plant can have- roots, stem, leaves, flowers, fruit, seed. Can we see these on the picture?* Point out the six plant parts, noting that roots grow underground, and seeds grow inside of fruit.
  3. Ask students which plant part they think parsnips are- *the root!* Stretch down to your ankles/ feet, and have students follow suit.
  4. Stand up straight and gently twist from side to side. *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. Outreach your arms towards the ceiling/ sky, and telling 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. What is your favorite fruit? Make your body look like that fruit.* Some examples would be acting like a banana, stretching your entire body tall and thin, or 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?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *Oliver's Vegetables*

#### Materials:

- *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French
- Picture or example of cabbage head

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? Are they any that you've eaten?*
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 if anyone has 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Bubble and Squeak

### Materials:

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

**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- this 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 garlic press. Remind students to peel garlic before pressing.
4. Students can mash pre-cooked potatoes. Place potatoes in a large, stable bowl. Demonstrate how to mash potatoes using 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 mashed potato. 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.

## **Activity 3: Cabbage Exploration**

**Materials:**

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

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. *Is it heavy? Soft? Hard?* Have students draw what they think the inside of the cabbage will look like. *Will it be the same color as the outside?*
3. 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 in bowl.
4. 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 understand that there are different varieties of beets. They will prepare a dish using these vegetables.

**Guiding Questions:** How do beets and rutabagas grow? How can we cook them?

---

## Activity 1: Story- *Rah, Rah, Radishes*

### Materials:

- *Rah, Rah, Radishes!: A Vegetable Chant* by April Pulley Sayre
- Examples or pictures of beets

**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 if they can remember what vegetable we are learning about today (beets!). *Has anyone eaten a beet before? Do we know anything about beets?* Show students either a picture of beets, or if you have an example pass it around.
4. Explain that *the part of the beet that we eat is the root- and it 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.*
5. 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.
6. 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.

7. Allow for time for students to ask questions or share comments about beets. Remind them that they will be cooking and tasting a dish with beets in it today. Prepare to transition to cooking activity.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Root Vegetable Fries

### Materials:

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

**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 lesson period. Be sure to have an adult supervising each group.

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. Set up work stations with cutting boards, peelers, and crinkle cutters. Demonstrate how to use each tool safely- peeling away from yourself, holding crinkle cutter with both hands, and having 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 veggies and add minced garlic, salt, and pepper. Use a mixing spoon to coat vegetables with oil and seasonings- pass bowl around group so each students is able to help.
4. Spread out vegetables in an even layer on a baking sheet, and bake until crisp.

### Roasted 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 strip 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.

## Activity 3: Beet Juice Painting

### Materials:

- Cardstock
  - Paint brushes
  - Beet juice (see below for more information)
  - Small bowls or cups
  - Smocks
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 desired consistency is reached.
  3. Set up a station for each student with a piece of cardstock, smock, and pencil. On the table, place a container with beet paint and paintbrushes so every few students can 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?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *The Carrot Seed*

#### Materials:

- *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss
  - Picture or examples of carrots, ideally including different colored carrot varieties
  - Examples of carrot seeds
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. *Has anyone planted a garden before? Did they grow 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 around. *Can you believe that a tiny carrot seed can turn into a big carrot?*
  4. Ask students who has eaten a carrot before. *Did they enjoy it? What does a carrot taste like?* 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. 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!*
  5. Remind students that they will be making and trying a new recipe with carrots today. Prepare to transition to next activity.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Carrot Fries

### 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)
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 half peel carrots and chop off tops, while the others can mix together coating. Ideally, have an adult lead each group and switch 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:

Heat oven to 425 degrees F. Line a shallow pan with foil.  
Peel carrots. Cut in half widthwise, then cut lengthwise into sticks.

In a mixing bowl, combine carrot sticks, olive oil, honey, salt, rosemary and pepper. Stir until carrots are evenly coated.

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

## Activity 3: Handprint Carrots

### Materials:

- Large pieces of white paper, one per student
- Pencils
- Black markers
- Green and orange paint
- Paintbrushes
- Smocks

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 prevent painted clothes, 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 plant part are mixed greens? How do seeds grow into plants?

---

## Activity 1: Story- *The Tiny Seed*

### Materials:

- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
- Images of different types of salad greens

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 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. *Did all of the seeds end up growing into plants? What happened to some of those seeds?* Allow students to lead discussion and voice their thoughts- prompt with questions, if needed.
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 if 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Garden Salad and Homemade Dressing

### 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, sunflower seeds, shoots or sprouts

**Educator Tip:** 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- this will be their workstation. Explain 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: ½ cup

Ingredients:

6 Tbsp. olive oil

2 Tbsp. cider vinegar

2 tsp. honey

1 tsp. fresh grated ginger or ⅓ tsp. dried ginger

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

½ tsp. garlic

salt and pepper, to taste

## Activity 3: Growing Microgreens

### 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

**Educator Tip:** Before starting activity, prep planting container by poking drainage holes in the bottom (if necessary) and filling partially with potting soil- 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. These 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, educator will sprinkle a thin layer of soil on top of seeds. Show students the spray bottle that will be used to water our seeds. Soil should be moist, but not soggy. 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 seeds.

5. When plants have sprouted and leaves have unfurled, cut right above 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.

# 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? How do they look and smell? What can we make with them?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *The Yummy Alphabet Book*

#### Materials:

- *The Yummy Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta
  - Images or physical examples of fresh herbs- consider basil, parsley, dill, chives, or mint
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 if anyone has heard the word “herb” before- what do you think it means?
  2. Explain that *herbs are plants that can 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 preparing 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 all 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 of 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Herbed Pasta Salad

### Materials:

- Bowls
- Cutting boards
- Measuring cups
- Crinkle cutters
- Kid-safe knives
- Whisk
- Ingredients (see recipe below)

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 herbs 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)  
3/8 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, and 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.

## Activity 3: Herbs Variety Taste Test

### 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

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 also 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 a small leaf or piece of one variety of an herb to each student. Ask them to use their sense of smell to observe and explore this herb. *Does it smell sweet? Earthy?* Allow for students to share their comments and thoughts.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. **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?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *Blueberries for Sal*

#### Materials:

- *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey
  - Picture of berry bushes
  - Examples of berries- blueberries, raspberries, and/or strawberries
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 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. *Has anyone 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- can we 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.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Berry Smoothies

### Materials:

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

**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 not to touch their faces 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 were some of the ingredients? 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 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.

## Activity 3: Berry Fingerpainting

**Materials:**

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

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 onto a 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. 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?

---

### Activity 1: Story- *I Will Never NOT EVER Eat a Tomato*

#### Materials:

- *I Will Never NOT EVER Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child
  - Examples of tomatoes or images of tomato plant
1. Gather students in a quiet circle with calm bodies. Introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about tomatoes today. *Has anyone eaten a tomato before? Tomatoes are the main ingredient in pasta sauce and ketchup, so you may have had a tomato without even realizing!* 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 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. *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 next activity.

## Activity 2: Cooking Activity- Fresh Salsa

### Materials:

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

**Educator Tip:** 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 but 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 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 to students.
4. Once all produce has been chopped, combine in a large mixing bowl and add lime juice, oil, salt and pepper. Pass 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.

## Activity 3: Tomato Observations and Taste Test

### Materials:

- Paper and crayons for each students
- Variety of tomatoes (heirloom, beefsteak, Roma, cherry, etc.)
- Cutting board
- Knife

**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, 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- *Did they have a favorite tomato that they tried? What did all of the tomatoes have in common? How were they different?*
4. Compile drawings and descriptive words and display on a classroom wall for the month.

## 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. Again, 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.

**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 replies 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 is more educational/ experiential than production-based, maintenance and weeding over the summer is useful. Weeding early is much easier than when plants have gotten 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.

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 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 these 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-planting, maintaining, and harvesting it.

# 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, but if there is a slip-up, simply have the child re-wash their hands. Having adults model good hygiene practices is helpful to encourage 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 doing using it. If possible, have a flat edge of your vegetable that can be placed faced-down 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) 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, there is importance in making sure that all students are occupied. We recommended 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.

## Involve Students in Clean-Up

Establish cleaning up after cooking 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 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 that cannot be cut with butter or tables knives- 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 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.