

Plant Part Art

Nutrition Activities for the Classroom

Description

Students take part in an activity that emphasizes edible plant parts: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, seeds.

Objectives

Students will learn about plant parts and the different parts of the plant we eat.

Time About 25-30 minutes (excluding shopping and prep)

Materials

- Large poster of a plant showing the parts clearly or individual handouts of same.
- A good selection of fruits and vegetables from all parts of the plant. Alternatively, a set of pictures showing various fruits and vegetables. The CA Department of Education offers an excellent set with both English and Spanish identifiers.*
- Plant Part Art:
 - Large flat whole wheat crackers (2 boxes for about 20-30)
 - Cream cheese (16 oz for a group of about 20-30)
 - Shredded carrot, celery, spinach or lettuce leaves, broccoli florets, sunflower seeds, red bell peppers
 - One set = 5-6 small bowls, small paper plates and napkins, plastic knives for spreading cream cheese (more sets if working with groups at tables)

Preparation: (about 5-10 minutes, excluding shopping)

- Purchase a variety of fruits and vegetables, mostly well known, and a few unusual. Purchase additional f/vegs specifically for plant part art. Wash all vegetables.
- Cut vegetables so that they are different sizes and textures: shred carrots; slice celery in half lengthwise and cut into 2-3" lengths; tear spinach or lettuce into small pieces; cut broccoli florets small; cut small strips of red bell pepper.
- Set all the plant part art veggies out in small bowls and assemble crackers and cream cheese. This can be done with up to 10 students around a long rectangular table or if working with a larger group, it is best to place an entire set (bowls with vegs, cream cheese, crackers, plates and napkins) on each table.

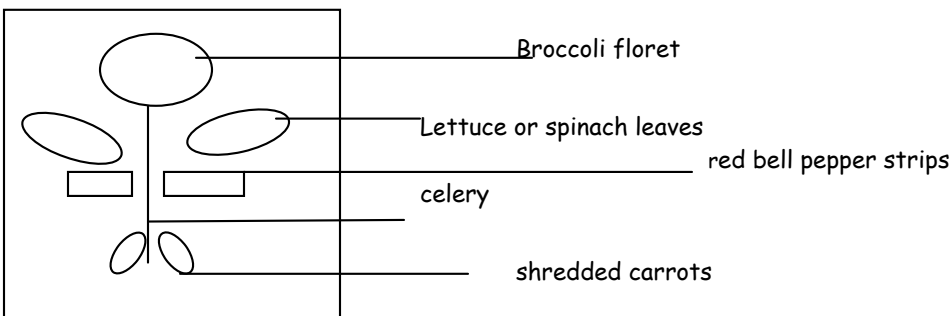
Instructions:

1. Using Plant Poster, ask students if they can identify all parts of the plant. Discuss functions of each part. You can bring in photosynthesis and other science concepts here. Discuss by asking, "Did you know that we can eat from all parts of the plant? Roots, stems, leaves, seeds, flowers and fruit. For the plant, anything that holds the seeds is a fruit. Some of the plant's fruit we actually consider to be

vegetables, but for the plant they are fruit. Give examples. Talk about other parts we eat.

2. Show various fruits and vegetables or pictures of them and ask students to guess which part of the plant they are. Discuss and reinforce concepts.
3. Tell students that they are going to make art out of plant parts. Have them wash their hands.
4. Show and explain which f/vegs they will be working with (set out on tables). Demonstrate (see below) how to create a plant part "canvas" by spreading a cracker with cream cheese and placing the veggies: carrots are the root and "feet"; celery is the stem and "body"; lettuce or spinach are the leaves and "arms"; broccoli floret is the flower and "head"; seeds are extra. *Emphasize to students that they can create whatever they want—and they will!* Many students make 3-dimensional art. They can treasure their art work for a while, but should eat it soon.

Review what the students have learned.



Some examples of plant parts

Roots: beets, carrots, radishes, turnips, rutabagas, ginger, parsnip

Stems: Asparagus, rhubarb, broccoli stem, bamboo shoots, sugar cane, potato (tuber) (Note: in this activity, celery is presented as a stem, although botanically it is not the stem, but the petiole.)

Leaves: spinach, lettuce, etc.

Fruits: the obvious, plus veggies as the plant's "fruit" (seed container), e.g., peas, beans, zucchini, tomato

Edible Flowers: broccoli heads, artichoke, cauliflower heads, nasturtium, calendula

Seeds: sunflower seeds, corn kernels, other seeds and nuts

Good Reference: TWIGS, Teams With Intergenerational Support; UC Cooperative Extension, San Mateo & San Francisco Counties (650) 726-9059

To order "Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Photo Cards" (\$45.00), call CA Department of Education, Press Sales Office, 1-800-995-4099 or visit: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cdepress>.