

September

Harvests of the Month

First two weeks: Melons

Second two weeks: Tomatoes

If these are not available in your school garden, they should be available at the Boulder County Farmers Market. Grocery stores often have locally-grown produce in season, too.

Please choose at least one activity from each week to go along with your weekly gardening time. You may also create your own lesson plan.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
MELON ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>One Watermelon Seed</i> , by Celia Lottridge, p. 2	Watermelon Mystery Bag and Taste Test, p. 2	Watermelon...Where Do You Come From?, p. 3	Recipe – Watermelon Soup, p. 4	Gardening!
MELON ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>The Cantaloupe Cat</i> , by Jan Yager, p. 4	Cantaloupe Mystery Bag and Taste Test, p. 4	Cantaloupe, A Look Inside, p. 5	Recipe – Cantaloupe Melon Kabobs, p. 6	Gardening!
TOMATO ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>Runaway Tomato</i> , by Kim Cooley Reeder, p. 7	Tomato Mystery Bag, p. 7	Tomato Taste Test, p. 8	Recipe – Caprese Salad, p. 9	Gardening!
TOMATO ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>Tomatoes Grow on a Vine</i> , by Mari C. Schuh, p. 9	Field Trip: Farmers' Market Tomato-Themed Scavenger Hunt, p. 9	Tomato...Where Do You Come From?, p. 10	Recipe – Pico de Gallo, p. 10	Gardening!

Note: Please feel free to adapt these activities as necessary. Younger children may require additional assistance with some of the tasks required.

Melons

Fun Facts

- **Botany**
 - Melons are an annual fruit and require a long growing season. Annual plants perform their entire life cycle (from seed to flower to seed) within a single growing season. All roots, stems and leaves of the plant die annually.
 - There are male and female flowers on the plant, which require bees for pollination. On average, it takes about 10 to 15 bee visits to grow melons.
 - They grow best under conditions with warm, sunny days and cool nights.
 - Melons are members of the cucurbitaceae family, which also include cucumbers, gourds, squashes, pumpkins, cucumbers and luffa (among others).
 - There are four main varieties of watermelon: allsweet, ice-box, seedless, and yellow flesh.
- **History**
 - Melons are believed to be one of the earliest domesticated plants having first been cultivated between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago in Africa and Southwest Asia.
 - They were brought to Europe towards the end of the Roman Empire and to North America by Christopher Columbus on his second expedition to the new world.
 - It was not until the latter half of the 20th century that melons were commercially cultivated in the US. Before that, they were mostly grown in home gardens. China is the largest producer of melons in the world.
 - By weight, the watermelon is the most common melon consumed in America, followed by the cantaloupe and honeydew.
- **Nutrition**
 - A ½ cup of cantaloupe is an excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin A.
 - A ½ cup of casaba, honeydew and watermelon are good sources of vitamin C.
 - Melons provide a rich source of carotenoids, such as lycopene (watermelon) and beta-carotene (cantaloupe). Lycopene is an antioxidant that may decrease the risk of certain cancers and heart disease and also help to keep the immune system healthy. Lycopene cannot be produced in the body so it can only be obtained by eating lycopene-rich foods. Beta-carotene is a carotenoid – an antioxidant that give plants their reddish-violet colors. Beta-carotene is used by your body to make vitamin A, which helps keep skin, eyes, and the immune system healthy.

Adapted from: http://www.harvestforhealthykids.org/wp-content/themes/harvest/assets/HfHK_Melon.zip and http://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Summer/021712/ED_Melons_Newsletter_Final.pdf

Activity: Book – *One Watermelon Seed*, by Celia Lottridge

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

1. Children will be introduced to watermelon as a fruit.
2. Children will practice counting.

Materials: *One Watermelon Seed*, by Celia Lottridge

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Read book, identifying any produce from the story that is also being grown in your garden.

Activity: Watermelon Mystery Bag and Taste Test

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 20 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify watermelon as a heavy, round fruit.
- Children will describe the outside appearance and smell of watermelon.

Materials: Mystery bag/box, chef's knife, cutting board, watermelon, plates (1/child), napkins (1/child)

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.



2. Wash watermelon thoroughly: 1) Wash the outer surface of the melon under running cool tap water to remove surface dirt; 2) scrub melon with a clean produce brush before cutting; and 3) cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.
3. Cut watermelon into triangular slices (including the rind), reserving at least one pre-cut watermelon slice per child for tasting.
4. Place a whole watermelon in the mystery bag/box. Keep the remainder out of sight of children.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands.
3. Mystery Bag/box
 - a. Introduce or reintroduce the mystery bag/box, if you have used it before. One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the bag/box with the child. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the watermelon. Show the watermelon to the children. Note the children's guesses that were close (round, a melon, food) or correct (watermelon). Offer each child a clean slice of watermelon on a napkin to look at, touch, and smell. Talk about watermelon. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like:
 - i. Is a watermelon a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - ii. What shape is it? (Round, oval)
 - iii. What color is the outside of the watermelon? (Green)
 - iv. What color are the seeds? (Black)
 - v. Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell sweet)
 - vi. Is it light or heavy? (Heavy like a bowling ball)
 - vii. Has anyone ever tasted a watermelon? (Yes or No)
4. Tasting
 - a. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands.
 - b. Provide each child with a piece of watermelon. Invite children to taste the watermelon. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners:
 - i. "Don't yuck my yum!" Remind children that we do not say negative things about how something tastes because it might offend someone and discourage others from trying something new.
 - ii. If a child tries something that they do not like, request that they quietly spit it out in a napkin so other children have an opportunity to taste it and form their own opinions.
 - iii. Encourage children to use respectful language like "I don't care for it."
 - iv. Remind children that sometimes it takes trying new things 10 times before you begin to like them.
 - c. Ask the children:
 - i. Is the watermelon juicy/crunchy/fleshy? (Juicy, possibly crunchy)
 - ii. How does the watermelon taste? (Sweet)
5. Optional: Create a sticker chart for children to document whether they "liked" the watermelon or "don't like it yet." A sample chart is included at the end of this document.

Activity: Watermelon...Where Do You Come From?

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will describe how watermelons grow from a seed into a plant that produces watermelons.
- Children will describe the resources needed to grow watermelons.

Materials: Dried watermelon seeds or a packet of watermelon seeds, yardstick, picture of watermelon plant, watermelon

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Tell the children they will learn about how watermelons grow. Show the children the watermelon seeds. If you are using seeds from a packet, tell the children the seeds are just like the ones from the inside of the watermelon. People buy packages of seeds to grow watermelons in gardens.
3. Pass the seeds around. Let the children touch and count the seeds.
4. Explain that the watermelon seeds are planted in the soil at least three feet apart. Watermelon seeds need enough room to spread out when they grow. Have two children hold the yardstick between them to show a three-foot length.



5. Explain that the watermelon seeds are planted in the soil in the spring. The sun and rain help them grow into long vines above the ground. Yellow flowers bloom on the vines. Where the flowers bloomed on the vine, watermelon fruits will grow during the summer.
6. Explain that the watermelon is picked when the rind (the outside) on the bottom of the watermelon where it was sitting on the ground turns a cream or yellow color and the tendrils coming off of the melon are starting to turn brown. Show a picture of a ripe watermelon (see Harvest for Healthy Kids' Melon Picture Cards - http://www.harvestforhealthykids.org/wp-content/themes/harvest/assets/HfHK_Melon.zip.)
7. Explain that ripe watermelons are picked and taken to a grocery store or farmers' market. This is where people buy them and take them home to eat.

Activity: Recipe – Watermelon Soup

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 20 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will try watermelon prepared in a new way.

Materials: Chef's knife, cutting board, blender, measuring cups, bowls (1/child), spoons (1/child), napkins (1/child)

Servings: 16, ¼ cup servings

Ingredients:

- 4 cups seedless watermelon, cut up
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp lime juice
- 1 Tbsp honey (optional)
- Plain low-fat or fat free Greek yogurt (for serving, optional)

Procedure:

1. Cut watermelon into chunks and chill in refrigerator.
2. Have children wash hands. Ask children to help you count the cups of watermelon as you pour them into the blender. Add lemon juice and lime juice and blend. Taste. To add sweetness, add honey and blend.
3. Ladle into bowls. Add a spoonful of yogurt (if using) to each bowl. Serve immediately.
4. As children eat their "soup," discuss how the soup tastes. Can they tell it is watermelon? Do they prefer watermelon slices or soup? How else might the watermelon be prepared? (It can be grilled, frozen into an icy dessert, or used in smoothies.)

Activity: Book – *The Cantaloupe Cat*, by Jan Yager

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will learn that every person is unique.
- Children will identify their own unique "likes."

Materials: *The Cantaloupe Cat*, by Jan Yager

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Read book with children.
3. Discuss how the cat was unique because he likes to eat cantaloupe.
4. Explain that everyone has different "likes." Ask children to share their "likes." (This activity is meant to focus on the fruits and vegetables children like, but can certainly be expanded to include any other "likes" or unique characteristics you are comfortable discussing.)

Activity: Cantaloupe Mystery Bag and Taste Test

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 20 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify cantaloupe as a heavy, round fruit that is rough on the outside.
- Children will describe the outside appearance and smell of cantaloupe.

Materials: Mystery bag/box, chef's knife, cutting board, cantaloupe

Preparation:



1. Gather materials.
2. Wash cantaloupe thoroughly: 1) Wash the outer surface of the melon under running cool tap water to remove surface dirt; 2) scrub melon with a clean produce brush before cutting; and 3) cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.
3. Cut cantaloupe into triangular slices (including the rind), reserving at least one pre-cut cantaloupe slice per child for tasting.
4. Place a whole cantaloupe in the mystery bag/box. Keep the remainder out of sight of children.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands.
3. Mystery Bag/box
 - a. Introduce or reintroduce the mystery bag/box, if you have used it before. One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the bag/box with the child. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the cantaloupe. Show the cantaloupe to the children. Note the children's guesses that were close (round, a melon, food) or correct (cantaloupe). Offer each child a clean slice of cantaloupe on a napkin to look at, touch, and smell. Talk about cantaloupe. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like:
 - i. Is a cantaloupe a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - ii. What shape is it? (Round, like a ball)
 - iii. What color is the cantaloupe? (Tan, like sand)
 - iv. Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell sweet)
 - v. Is it light or heavy? (Heavy)
 - vi. Has anyone ever tasted a cantaloupe? (Yes or No)
4. Tasting
 - a. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands.
 - b. Provide each child with a piece of cantaloupe. Invite children to taste the cantaloupe. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners:
 - i. "Don't yuck my yum!" Remind children that we do not say negative things about how something tastes because it might offend someone and discourage others from trying something new.
 - ii. If a child tries something that they do not like, request that they quietly spit it out in a napkin so other children have an opportunity to taste it and form their own opinions.
 - iii. Encourage children to use respectful language like "I don't care for it."
 - iv. Remind children that sometimes it takes trying new things 10 times before you begin to like them.
 - c. Ask the children:
 - i. Is the cantaloupe soft/chewy/fleshy? (Fleshy)
 - ii. How does the cantaloupe taste? (Sweet)
 - iii. What color is the cantaloupe on the inside? (Orange)
5. Optional: Create a sticker chart for children to document whether they "liked" the cantaloupe or "don't like it yet." A sample chart is included at the end of this document.

Activity: Cantaloupe, A Look Inside

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will describe the appearance, smell, and taste of cantaloupe.
- Children will tell that the orange flesh of a cantaloupe can be eaten, but not the rind or seeds.

Materials: Cantaloupe, chef's knife, cutting board, spoon, container to hold removed seeds, towels for wiping hands, plates (1/child), napkins (1/child)

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.
2. Wash cantaloupe thoroughly: 1) Wash the outer surface of the melon under running cool tap water to remove surface dirt; 2) scrub melon with a clean produce brush before cutting; and 3) cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Have children gather around the cantaloupe and cutting board. Review how to be safe around sharp knives; only adults use them, children keep their hands away, and do not touch sharp knives.



3. Review with the children what they have learned about cantaloupe, or tell children you have a cantaloupe to share today.
4. Tell children cantaloupes grow on the ground. We have to wash the outside very well to remove soil and germs before we cut it open. Tell them you have already washed the cantaloupe.
5. Cut the cantaloupe in half to reveal the inside. Have a paper towel handy to wipe up extra juices. Using the spoon, scoop the center strings and seeds into a bowl and set aside. Let children know they will get to touch the seeds a little later.
6. Cut a section of cantaloupe into small wedges with the rind intact. Give each child a small wedge of cantaloupe for individual exploration.
7. Talk with the children about the inside of the cantaloupe. Lead the children through the questions below and ask additional questions if you like:
 - a. What colors are on the inside of the cantaloupe? (Orange, green, white)
 - b. What does the inside of the cantaloupe look like? (Seeds, slippery string-like fibers, and orange flesh)
 - c. How does the inside feel? (Cool and smooth)
 - d. How does the cantaloupe smell? (Sweet)
8. Invite children to taste the cantaloupe. Remind them not to eat the rind. While they're eating, ask the following questions:
 - a. How does the cantaloupe feel in their mouth? (Smooth and juicy)
 - b. How does the cantaloupe taste? (sweet)
9. After everyone has sampled their own cantaloupe wedge, invite the children to come to the bowl and feel the string-like fibers and seeds, from the inside of the cantaloupe. Ask the children: How do the seeds and string-like fibers feel? (Wet and Slippery)
10. After the children have felt the seeds and strings, have them wash their hands.

Activity: Recipe – Cantaloupe Melon Kabobs

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify the tastes of different melons.

Materials: Chef's knife, cutting board, 12 wooden craft sticks, bowls (1/child), napkins (1/child)

Servings: 12 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh watermelon, cut into 1-inch cubes, seeds removed
- 1 cup fresh cantaloupe, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 cup fresh honeydew melon, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 cup plain low-fat or fat free yogurt, for dipping or drizzling

Procedure:

1. Wash melons thoroughly: 1) Wash the outer surface of the melon under running cool tap water to remove surface dirt; 2) scrub melon with a clean produce brush before cutting; and 3) cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.
2. Cut melons into 1-inch cubes.
3. Pour yogurt into bowls (1/child).
4. Have children wash hands. Provide each child with a craft stick and enough melon pieces to fit on stick. Demonstrate how to press wooden stick through center of fruit pieces, and assist children as necessary. Leave 1-inch of stick bare for a handle at one end. Repeat pressing other pieces of melon on wooden stick alternating types until stick is full. Refrigerate or serve immediately. Offer yogurt as sauce for dipping kabobs. Compare and contrast the different melons as children eat their kabobs. Do they have a favorite melon?
5. Optional: Have children make patterns with their fruit pieces.
6. Optional: Freeze kabobs for a cool, frosty fruit treat on a hot summer day. Place kabobs on a tray and place in the freezer for 30 minutes, then serve.



Tomatoes

Fun Facts

- **Botany**

- The tomato is a berry of the nightshade family, which includes potatoes, eggplants and peppers.
- There are more than 4,000 varieties of tomatoes ranging in size, shape, and color. Varieties are commonly divided into these four categories, based mostly on shape, use, and size (small to large):
 - Cherry: Sweet tomatoes, usually eaten whole in salads.
 - Plum: Pear-shaped, more meaty, ideal for tomato products, also called Italian or Roma.
 - Slicing: Round or globe-shaped, used mainly for commerce and processed products.
 - Beefsteak: Round, juicy, used mainly for sandwiches
 - Other varieties include heirlooms, green, orange, and yellow tomatoes. Yellow and orange tomatoes tend to be sweeter than red and green varieties; only red tomatoes contain lycopene. (See the "nutrition" section for additional information about the health benefits of lycopene.)

- **History**

- The first tomatoes can be traced back to the Andes in Peru, where they grew wild as cherry-sized berries. As early as 700 A.D., the Incas and Aztecs began cultivating tomato plants.
- The word "tomato" is derived from the Nahuatl (Aztec language) word, *tomatl*, meaning "something round and plump."
- In the mid-1500s, Spanish conquistadors carried tomato seeds back to Europe, where they were embraced in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.
- In 17th and 18th century England, tomatoes were believed to be poisonous and called "devil apples." Eating the stems and leaves may cause illness and should be avoided.
- Thomas Jefferson was one of the first Americans to grow tomatoes at his Virginia home as early as 1781. By 1812, tomatoes were gaining in popularity among Louisiana Creoles who used them in jambalayas and gumbos and Maine cooks who added them to seafood dishes.
- In the 1893 U.S. Supreme Court case of "Nix v. Hedden," the tomato was declared a vegetable, along with cucumbers, squashes, beans and peas. This came about as a result of tariff laws in 1887, which imposed a duty on vegetables but not fruits.
- George Washington Carver believed tomatoes had "medicinal virtues." After World War I, he issued "115 Ways to Prepare It [Tomatoes] For the Table" thus marking the introduction of the tomato into popular culture.
- According to USDA, Americans eat more than 22 pounds of tomatoes each year, more than half of this amount in the form of ketchup and/or tomato sauce.

- **Nutrition**

- A ½ cup of sliced tomato is a good source of vitamins C, A, K and potassium.
- Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which is an antioxidant that may decrease the risk of certain cancers and heart disease and also help to keep the immune system healthy. Lycopene cannot be produced in the body so it can only be obtained by eating lycopene-rich foods.

Adapted from: http://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Fall/21712/Ed_News_Tomatoes.pdf

Activity: Book – *Runaway Tomato*, by Kim Cooley Reeder

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will describe the resources a tomato needs to grow.

Materials: *Runaway Tomato*, by Kim Cooley Reeder

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Read book with children. Discuss with the children how tomatoes grow. Ask them what a tomato needs to grow? (Water, soil, sun). Brainstorm what you could make with a giant tomato (spaghetti sauce, pizza, tomato soup, salads, etc).

Activity: Tomato Mystery Bag

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 20 minutes



Objective(s):

- Children will identify tomatoes as a smooth, round fruit.
- Children will describe the outside appearance, feel, and smell of tomatoes.

Materials: Mystery bag/box, chef's knife, cutting board, fresh tomato

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.
2. Place a tomato in the mystery bag/box. Keep the remainder out of sight of children.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands.
3. Mystery Bag/box
 - a. Introduce or reintroduce the mystery bag/box, if you have used it before. One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the bag/box with the child. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the tomato. Show the tomato to the children. Note the children's guesses that were close (thick, solid, fruit, food) or correct (tomato). Offer each child a clean slice of tomato on a napkin to look at, touch, and smell. Talk about tomato. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
4. Tasting
 - a. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands.
 - b. Provide each child with a piece of tomato. Invite children to taste the tomato. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners:
 - i. "Don't yuck my yum!" Remind children that we do not say negative things about how something tastes because it might offend someone and discourage others from trying something new.
 - ii. If a child tries something that they do not like, request that they quietly spit it out in a napkin so other children have an opportunity to taste it and form their own opinions.
 - iii. Encourage children to use respectful language like "I don't care for it."
 - iv. Remind children that sometimes it takes trying new things 10 times before you begin to like them.
 - c. Ask the children:
 - i. Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - ii. What shape is it? (Round)
 - iii. What color is it? (Red)
 - iv. How does it feel? (Smooth, soft)
 - v. Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell sweet or like grass)
 - vi. Is it light or heavy? (Light)
5. Optional: Create a sticker chart for children to document whether they 'liked' the tomato or 'don't like it yet'. A sample chart is included at the end of this document.

Activity: Tomato Taste Test

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will taste tomato.
- Children will describe the taste and texture of tomato.

Materials: Chef's knife, cutting board, tomatoes (enough for each child to have 1-2 bite-sized pieces), plates (1/child), napkins (1/child)

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.
2. Wash and cut tomato into bite-sized pieces for tasting.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands. If this is the first activity involving food tasting, talk with the children about polite food tasting habits.
3. Provide each child with a piece of tomato. Invite children to taste the tomato. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners. Ask the children:
 - a. Is the tomato soft/chewy/fleshy? (Soft/fleshy)



- b. How does the tomato taste? (Watery, mild, sweet)
4. Optional: Create a sticker chart for children to document whether they “liked” the tomato or “don’t like it yet.” A sample chart is included at the end of this document.

Activity: Recipe – Caprese Salad

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will try tomatoes prepared in a new way.

Materials: Chef’s knife, cutting board, bowls (1/child) and forks (1/child)

Servings: 1 salad/child

Ingredients:

- Mozzarella sticks (1/child)
- Bite-size pieces of tomato (¼ cup/child)
- Basil leaves (2-3/child)
- Virgin olive oil (as needed)

Procedure:

1. Ahead of Time: Wash and cut up tomatoes. Wash and dry basil leaves.
2. Have children wash their hands. Explain that you are going to try eating tomatoes in a new way.
3. Give each child a bowl, a fork, a mozzarella stick, tomatoes, and basil leaves. Have each child break their cheese stick into bite-sized pieces and place in their bowl with tomatoes. Have children tear basil leaves into smaller pieces and place in their bowl.
4. Allow children to drizzle olive oil on top if desired. Stir and enjoy!
5. As they eat their snack, ask children what else might taste good with tomatoes.

Activity: Book – *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine*, by Mari C. Schuh

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will be able to identify the parts of a tomato plant.
- Children will learn the growing process of a tomato.

Materials: *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine*, by Mari C. Schuh

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Ask children if they know how tomatoes grow.
3. Read book with children. Review the growing process of the tomato plant with children. (See “How do Tomatoes Grow” Harvest for Healthy Kids Picture Card for a picture and description of the tomato growing process – http://www.harvestforhealthykids.org/wp-content/themes/harvest/assets/HfHK_Tomatoes.zip.) How will they know when the tomato is ripe and ready to be picked?

Activity: Field Trip: Farmers’ Market Tomato-Themed Scavenger Hunt

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: ½ day

Objective(s):

- Children will become familiar with a farmers’ market.
- Children will identify different varieties of tomatoes that can be grown and purchased locally.

Materials: Notebooks (1/child, optional), pencils (1/child, optional)

Preparation:

1. Plan ahead! Schedule a field trip to your local Boulder County Farmers Market. (See <https://bcfm.org/> for times and locations.)
2. Prepare children by explaining that farmers’ markets are a place where local farmers bring the food they grow to sell directly to you, without using grocery stores or trucks to ship food far away. Explain that the fruits and vegetables at a farmers’ market are grown right here near their homes and schools. Share with children that they are going to go on a scavenger hunt when they get to the farmers’ market to see how many different varieties (kinds) of tomatoes they can



find. If this is your child care program's first visit to a farmers' market, you may want to visit ahead of time to get to know the layout, etc.

Procedure:

1. Allow children to walk around the farmers' market to become familiar with it. Children can work in groups or individually to see how many different varieties of tomatoes they can find. Children may write or draw findings in a notebook, or a teacher or parent may keep track, or teachers may photograph children's findings. Allow children to choose several varieties of tomatoes to purchase and have a taste test and comparison when you return to school. (Remember to use your Veggie Bucks!)
2. Optional extensions: Challenge children to get to know different farmers, asking about how they grow their food or what other things they have on their farm. Ask children to compare prices from different farms. Consider why certain fruits or vegetables are not found at the farmers' market (not in season, don't grow here, weather destroyed this year's crop, etc).

Activity: Tomato...Where Do You Come From?

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will describe how tomatoes grows from a seed into a vine plant that produces tomatoes.
- Children will describe the resources needed to grow tomatoes.

Materials: Packet of tomato seeds, fresh tomato slices (1/child), clear plastic cup, ruler, tomato plant picture (see "How do Tomatoes Grow" Harvest for Healthy Kids Picture Card – http://www.harvestforhealthykids.org/wp-content/themes/harvest/assets/HfHK_Tomatoes.zip) or a real plant (if available), cutting board, chef's knife

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.
2. Slice tomatoes.
3. Pour tomato seeds into plastic cup.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain to children that you are going to learn about how tomatoes grow. Show children the tomato seeds from the packet. Tell children the seeds are just like the ones from the inside of the tomato. Pass the seeds around in the plastic cup.
3. Let children touch the seeds and count them. What shape are they?
4. Explain that the tomato seeds are planted in the soil in the early summer. Ask children if they know what else the seeds need to grow into a tomato plant. Using the ruler, show children that seeds must be planted at least 2-3 feet apart to have room to spread out as they grow. The seeds grow into long stalks with many branches and green leaves. Yellow flowers will bloom on the branches. This is where a tomato will grow.
5. Show children the picture of the tomato plant (or a real plant if you have one). Explain that tomatoes are picked when they are tender, brightly colored, and still have a glossy or shiny appearance. Their color will vary depending on the variety. Tomatoes can be red, yellow, orange, purple, or green.

Activity: Recipe – Pico de Gallo

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 20 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will try tomatoes prepared in a new way.

Materials: Chef's knife, cutting board, serving spoons (3), bowls (1/child), spoons (1/child)

Servings: 17, ½ cup servings

Ingredients:

- 8 large tomatoes, diced
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1-2 bunches fresh cilantro
- Minced garlic
- 2-3 limes
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Tortilla chips
- Optional: Jalapeno peppers, diced

Procedure:

1. Ahead of Time: Wash and dice tomatoes, onion, and garlic. Slice limes into enough pieces for each child to have one slice.



2. Have children wash their hands. Provide each child with a bowl and spoon. Allow children to take a spoonful each (depending on size of serving spoons) of tomato, onion, and garlic. Provide each child with a slice of lime to squeeze into their bowl and a stalk of cilantro. Children can pull the leaves off the stalk and add them to their bowl. Sprinkle with kosher salt and stir all ingredients together.
3. Give each child tortilla chips to eat with their Pico de Gallo. As children eat, ask them to describe the different flavors and textures of the Pico de Gallo. Can they taste the tomato? Do they like the tastes of all the ingredients separately? Or do they prefer them mixed together?



Name of Taste Test Here

"I LIKE THIS"



"ME GUSTA"

"I DON'T LIKE THIS YET"



"NO ME GUSTA
TODAVÍA"

