CUCUMBER

TASTEFUL HARVEST

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Healthy Nutrition and Learning Success

The classroom is one of the best places to teach students about the importance of eating healthy and being physically active. Studies show a relationship between good nutrition and academic performance. Tasteful Harvest connects with core curricula and links the classroom, cafeteria, and families.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size:	1/2 cup cucumbers, sliced (52g)
Calories 8	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturdated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	
Sodium 1mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 2g	1%
Dietary Fiber 0g	1%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 1%	Calcium 1%
Vitamin C 3%	Iron 1%

EXPLORING OKLAHOMA CUCUMBERS: TASTE TESTING

Getting Started:
Partner with your school nutrition staff, local farmers, or grocery stores. Get produce samples for taste testing.

What You Will Need (per group):
- 2 different varieties of raw, whole cucumbers
- 1 dill pickle
- Paring knives and cutting boards
- Napkins/paper towels

Activity:
- Have students make three columns and label with each variety of cucumber and dill pickle.
- Make five rows and label as: look, feel, touch, smell, taste.
- Examine each item using the five senses.
- Describe findings in the chart. Discuss similarities and differences as a class.
- Make another grid with the same column labels. Label four rows: sweet, salty, sour, bitter.
- Enter presence or absence of each taste bud sensation.
- Discuss the similarities and differences as a class.

For more ideas, reference: Kids Cook Farm-Fresh Food, CDE, 2002.

COOKING IN THE CLASSROOM

CHILLI CUCUMBERS

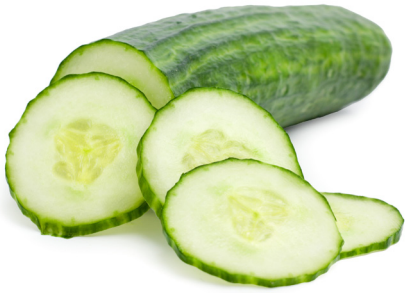
Ingredients: Makes 20 tastes
- 40 whole wheat crackers
- 3 large cucumbers (40 slices)
- Chili powder
- Serving tray and napkins

Directions
1. Place one cucumber slice on top of a cracker.
2. Sprinkle with chili powder.
3. Serve two crackers with napkin to each student.

ABOUT CUCUMBERS

Although less nutritious than most fruit, the fresh cucumber is still a very good source of vitamin C, vitamin K, and potassium, and also provides some dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin B6, thiamin, folate, pantothenic acid, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, copper, and manganese.

STICK TO THE FACTS



- Pureed or sliced cucumber gives an almost instant relief to sunburnt skin. Just place some against the affected area.
- Cucumbers are cool and moist due to their high water content and belong to the same family as pumpkins, zucchini, watermelon and other squashes.
- Using a pen and made a mistake? Take the outside of the cucumber and slowly use it to erase the pen writing, also works great on crayons and markers.
- Cucumber can actually cure bad breath. A slice pressed to the roof of your mouth for 30 seconds with your tongue allows the phytochemicals to kill the problematic bacteria.

STUDENT DISCOVERY LAB: CUCUMBER RESEARCH

1. Is a cucumber a fruit or vegetable? Make a list of produce items that are considered vegetables but are really fruits, and explain the difference.
2. Research the importance of water to health. Why does the body need water?
   - Conduct a blind taste test using water from tap and bottled water. Be sure both are the same temperature.
   - Which one do students like best? Is there a major difference in taste?
   - What advantages does tap water offer that bottled water does not (minerals, vitamins, convenience, price, etc.)?
   - Have students write a report of their findings.
1. How much water does the body need daily? How do you calculate that amount? What is your plan for getting enough water each day?
2. What are the “compartments” that hold water in our bodies?
3. What does parthenocarpy mean?

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Cool Cucurbits - PK-5
https://agclassroom.org/ok/lessons/cucurbits/cool_cucurbits.pdf
Here is just one sample activity:
Divide students into Cucumber Geography teams. Provide a World map for each team. As you name the places in the statements below where cucumbers have travelled, teams will compete be the first to find the locations on the map.

- The cucumber is believed native to India, and evidence indicates it has been cultivated in western Asia for 3,000 years.
- From India it spread to Greece and Italy, where the Romans were especially fond of the crop, and later into China. It was probably introduced into other parts of Europe by the Romans.
- Records of cucumber cultivation appear in France in the 9th century, England in the 14th century, and in North America by the mid-16th century.
- The Spaniards brought cucumbers to Haiti in 1494. In 1535 Cartier found “very great cucumbers” grown on the site of what is now Montreal in Canada. Captains Amidas and Barlow found cucumbers in Native American gardens in Virginia in 1584. They were also being grown by the Iroquois (on the east coast of the US) when the first Europeans visited them.

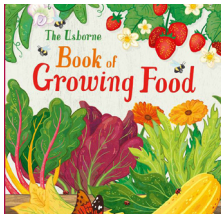
Nutritional Value of Fresh Produce - 3-5
https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?lpid=335&author_state=0&search_term_lp=vegetables

SCHOOL GARDEN: SEASONAL TRANSITIONS

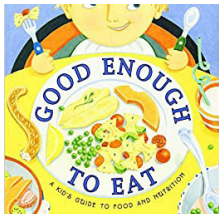
If your school has a garden, here is an activity you may want to implement. Look for donations to cover the cost of seeds, tools, irrigation systems, electric pumps, and any salary incurred by garden educators or others.
Spring is prime planting time. Pull up your sleeves, get in the garden, and GROW!

- April is the time to prepare your ground and raised beds for direct seeding and transplanting.
- May through early July is the best time for planting cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squashes, and gourds.
- Create a garden outside your classroom. There are a number of dwarf varieties in the Cucurbit family that are well-suited to containers.
- Visit your local nursery and check them out.

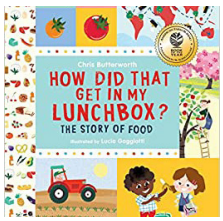
LITERATURE CONNECTIONS



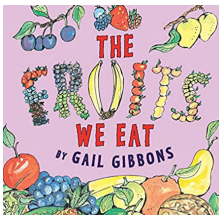
The Usborne Book of Growing Food



Good Enough to Eat by Lizzie Rockwell



How Did That Get in My Lunchbox? by Chris Butterworth



The Fruits We Eat by Gail Gibbons

HISTORY OF CUCUMBERS

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FARM TO ECE
EARLY CARE EDUCATION

Sample Activity from http://farmtopreschool.org/documents/F2PreKMayCucumber.pdf

Materials:
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Photo Cards
Cucumber Seeds
Soil
Small pot or any container with holes on the bottom (ie: yogurt cups)

1. Show the class the Cucumber Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Photo Card (or fresh cucumber if available).Ask the class "Do you know what vegetable this is?" "It's called Cucumber." Ask them to describe it, for example: it's long and green. (If using a fresh cucumber, ask the class if it feels hot or cold). Tell the class that this month's Harvest of Month Vegetable is Cucumber.

2. Tell the class that a cucumber is a vegetable that grows on a vine, like a pumpkin or kiwi. It is a healthy vegetable. Cucumbers contain a lot of water in them. They hold so much water that the temperature of a cucumber is cooler than the outside air.

3. What do you, a tree, and a hamster have in common? You all need water. All living things must have water to survive, whether they get it from a water fountain, a rain cloud, or a little bottle attached to the side of a hamster cage.4

4. Explain the importance of water. Without water, your body would stop working properly. Water makes up more than half of your body weight and a person needs it every day. Water makes up more than half of your body weight and a person can't survive for more than a few days

without it. Why? Your body has lots of important jobs and it needs water to do many of them. For instance, your blood, which contains a lot of water, carries oxy-gen to all the cells of your body.

5. Your body doesn't get water only from drinking water. Any liquid you drink will contain water, but water and milk are the best choices. Lots of foods contain water too. Fruit and vegetables contain quite a bit of water. Can you think of some fruits or vegetables that you have tasted that were really juicy and sometimes drip down your chin when you bite into it? Some examples are apples, kiwis, grapefruit, oranges, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

6. Today we are going to plant some cucumber seeds and watch them grow. As a class fill the pots up with soil. Make 3 holes in the soil 3 times the size of the width of the seed. Place a seed in each hole and cover with soil.

7. Ask the class, "What does this cucumber seed need to grow into a cucumber plant?" Water! Add water to the pot, place on a plate and place in a sunny window. The plant should sprout in 7-10 days

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

- Coordinate with school nutrition staff and ask them to provide different varieties of cucumbers* and pickles.
- Contact your local farmers' market to determine which produce is at its peak and work with a farmer to provide different fruits and vegetables for the tasting event.
- Design small information cards for each featured produce item and include: name, where it is grown, how to eat it, what key nutrients it provides, how to store it, where to buy it, and how much it costs.
- Invite parents to participate and offer suggestions for using the cards at home.