CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

TASTEFUL HARVEST

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.

SQUASH

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size:	1/2 cup zucchini, sliced (57g)	
Calories 9	Calories from Fat 1	
		% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g		0%
Saturdated Fat 0g		0%
Trans Fat 0g		0%
Cholesterol 0mg		0%
Sodium 6mg		0%
Total Carbohydrate 2g		1%
Dietary Fiber 1g		2%
Sugars 1g		
Protein 1g		
Vitamin A 2%	Calcium 1%	
Vitamin C 16%	Iron 1%	

COOKING IN THE CLASSROOM

Vegetable Kabobs & Dip

Ingredients:
8 raw zucchini, sliced
8 raw yellow squash, sliced
4 tomatoes, cut into eighths
32 mushrooms, whole
2 cups of lowfat vegetable dip
16 wooden kabob sticks, halved
Serving tray and napkins

Directions: Place zucchini, yellow squash, tomatoes and mushrooms on sticks, alternating colors.

Arrange on a tray and drizzle with dip. Serve with napkins and enjoy!

Source: https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Summer/021712/ED_Zucchini_Newsletter_Final.pdf

EXPLORING OKLAHOMA ZUCCHINI: TASTE TESTING

Getting Started:

- Partner with your school nutrition staff or a local retailer to get zucchini samples.
- Review Taste Testing Tips in the Educators' Corner of www.harvestofthemonth.com.
- Make arrangements to cook (steam) the zucchini in advance.

What You Will Need: (per group):

- 1 raw, whole zucchini and 1 cooked, sliced zucchini
- Paring knives and cutting boards
- Printed Nutrition Facts labels for zucchini

Activity:

- Explore look, feel, and smell of raw and cooked zucchini.
- Record observations.
- Make a drawing of raw zucchini and label parts (stem, end, skin).
- Make drawing of inside of cooked zucchini and label parts (flesh, seeds).
- Slice raw zucchini and taste; record observations. Repeat for cooked zucchini.
- Review Nutrition Facts label for raw zucchini.
- Hypothesize what happens to the nutrient values when zucchini is cooked. Research the nutrient information for cooked (boiled) zucchini.
- Survey classroom to find out if students preferred raw or cooked zucchini. Share results with school nutrition staff.

INFO ABOUT SQUASH

- Squash is usually divided into two categories - summer and winter. Summer squashes are harvested and eaten while their skin is still tender. Winter squash grows a thick skin, which helps it keep longer.
- Zucchini is a member of the Cucurbitaceae (Cucurbit) family, which includes melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and gourds.
- Zucchini is a type of summer squash, which are eaten when they are still immature, small, and have a soft rind.
- Summer squash are completely edible skin, seeds, flesh—whether raw or cooked.

STICK TO THE FACTS

- Summer squash is very low in calories and high in fiber. It is rich in beta-carotene, vitamin C, folic acid and calcium. One cup of summer squash has nearly as much potassium as a banana. It also contains the valuable mineral nutrient phosphorus.
- Zucchini is the most common variety of summer squash. Other varieties include: pattypan squash, crookneck squash, sunburst squash, yellow squash, chayote squash, and opo squash.
- When green summer squash started growing in the Mediterranean, Italians called it “zucchini” and the French called it “courgette.” Both names mean “small squash.”

STUDENT DISCOVERY LAB: THREE SISTERS GARDEN

Estimated Time: 60 minutes and on-going observation depending on planting situation.

Purpose
Students will investigate the “three sisters” crops (corn, beans, and squash) and explore the benefit to planting these crops together. Students will also learn about Native American Legends and plant growth.

Materials
- Three Sisters Investigation worksheet
- Three Sisters Legends handout

Explain to your class that they will be investigating the legend of the Three Sisters which focuses on the agriculture and food production techniques used by Native Americans. The three sisters refer to three crops that were commonly planted together – corn, beans and squash.

Hand out the Three Sisters Investigation worksheet and facilitate a class discussion that allows students to share what they know about corn, beans, and squash. (Examples could include: Corn – tall plant, kernels grow on ears, yellow in color, etc.) Instruct students to list the items in the chart. Feel free to share the information found in the Background Agricultural Connections section of the lesson or have students research the three crops using the internet or other resources to add to their chart.

Divide your class into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group one of the attached Three Sisters Legends handout. Instruct the students to read through their legend as a group and record characteristics of each sister in their chart on the Three Sisters Investigation worksheet. After the groups have read and discussed in a group, have each group share the characteristics of each sister (plant) with the whole class. They should also decide which crop each sister in their legend represents.

As a class, discuss how the legends relate to how the three sisters can help each other when planted together. For example: Several of the legends describe the sisters “becoming stronger together” or “three sisters helping and loving each other”. Examples of how the actual crops benefit each other include the corn providing a trellis or pole for the bean to climb. The bean providing nitrogen to the soil to help the corn grow. The squash prevents weeds from growing and deters pests.

For the complete lesson visit the National AITC site - or just click on this link:
https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?lpid=297&author_state=0&search_term_lp=squash

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Summer Squash – 3-5
https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpaorg/Grants_and_Partners/Recreation_and_Health/Commit_to_Health/Foods_of_the_Month/August/August-Experiential-Activities-Grades-3-5.pdf

Fresh from the Garden
http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu/files/97003.pdf

Cool Cucurbits – PK-5
https://www.agclassroom.org/ok/lessons/cucurbits/cool_cucurbits.pdf

3 Sisters – 3-4
https://www.agclassroom.org/ok/lessons/okstudies/3sisters.pdf

SCHOOL GARDEN: GROWING TIME

Does your school have a garden? Do you want to start one? There are many benefits of having a school garden, including: Extending science lessons from the classroom. Incorporating health and nutrition education messages. Increasing students' knowledge and preferences for fruits and vegetables. Getting physical activity by working in the garden.

Helpful Hint: If you want to learn how to start your own school garden or other educational resources, request a free copy of Let's Get Growing from Farm to School at OK State Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry.

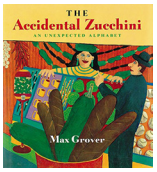
Bring Nutrition Education to the Garden

- Use your school garden for a nutrition education activity.
- Have students research the nutrition information for each produce item in the garden.
- Have students make their own signs to look like Nutrition Facts labels.
- List nutrients that meet the good or excellent sources requirements*.
- Make additional signs with "Serving Tips" on how to prepare and serve the fruit or vegetable.
- Affix signs to 6-8" sticks and stake in the garden bed.
- Conduct a garden scavenger hunt where students search for the produce with the greatest sources of vitamin A, vitamin C, fiber, calcium, and iron.

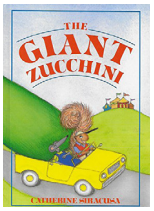
*Good sources provide 10-19% of the Daily Value. Excellent sources provide at least 20% of Daily Value

Source: https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Summer/021712/ED_Zucchini_Newsletter_Final.pdf

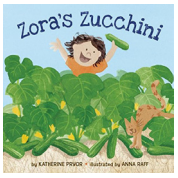
LITERATURE CONNECTIONS



The Accidental Zucchini by Max Grover



The Giant Zucchini by Catherine Siracusa



Zora's Zucchini by Katherine Pryor

The Ghost & Max Monroe: Case of the Missing Zucchini by L.M. Falcone

HISTORY OF SQUASH

- Archaeologists have traced squash origins to Mexico, dating back from 7,000 to 5,500 BC, when they were an integral part of the ancient diet of maize, beans, and squashes.
- The colonists of New England adopted the name squash, a word derived from several Native American words for the vegetable which meant "green thing eaten green." Eventually summer squash made its way to the warm Mediterranean regions of Europe where it thrived and was renamed zucchini by the Italians and courgette by the French. Both names mean "small squash," which implies that they were eaten at their small, young stage.
- George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were squash enthusiasts who even enjoyed growing them.
- According to Smithsonian archeologist Bruce Smith and archaeologist Wesley Cowan of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, a variety of squash native to the Ozark region of Arkansas and Missouri may be the living ancestor of today's many varieties of summer squash and related gourds. Their research indicates that is was cultivated in this area by native Indians more than 3,000 years ago.
- The Native Americans introduced squash to European settlers as one of the "Three Sisters" – three indigenous plants used for agriculture: maize (corn), beans, and squash.

FARM TO ECE
EARLY CARE EDUCATION

Story Time
Read *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert. Ask questions like those in the box to talk about the story. Stock the center library with this and other books featuring colorful produce. One place to find great book suggestions is the Multicultural Collection of Farm to ECE Books on the Ready, Set, Grow website: www.pareadysetgrow.org/book-list

Snack Time/Lunch Time

Materials:
Fruits and vegetables
Wavy chopper or other cutting utensil

Gather a variety of vegetables and fruits representing a rainbow of colors. Find produce in your garden or at a farm stand, farmers' market, or store. Here are some ideas:
- Red: radishes, tomatoes, red peppers, strawberries, raspberries, apples, watermelon
- Orange: carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, pumpkin
- Yellow: carrots, corn, potatoes, summer squash
- Green: collard greens, asparagus, kale, broccoli, zucchini, peas, celery, spinach, cucumbers
- Blue: blueberries
- Purple: grapes, eggplant, kohlrabi
- White: cauliflower, white potatoes

Taken from Wisconsin Farm to Preschool. For more ideas visit their site at https://wischoolgardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GotVeggies_ECE_August_2019_v2.pdf

CAFETERIA CONNECTIONS

Get your school's cafeteria involved in Harvest of the Month. Here are some tips to get started:
- Share results of students' preferences for raw or cooked zucchini (from taste testing activity).
- Ask if the cafeteria can feature the preferred variety in a meal or snack.
- Provide zucchini Nutrition Facts labels (raw and cooked) to display in the cafeteria.*
- Have students make posters, draw botanical images, or write poems about zucchini. Display in the cafeteria.
- Provide a list of healthy serving ideas for zucchini.
- Volunteer your class to help prepare a meal or snack featuring zucchini.
- Share a list of local farmers' markets near your school. Encourage school nutrition staff to connect with a grower to order produce.
- Invite school nutrition staff to help in the school garden.