

EAT

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Ask the children to examine the food seasonality poster in the cafeteria to see if they can identify one vegetable that grows on a vine that is typically harvested in the summer.

Discuss their observations and ideas when the students return back from lunch.

Answer: Tomato

LEARN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objective

Students will name fruits and vegetables typically harvested in the spring, summer, fall, and winter.

10 Minute Lesson

Students will be able to explain what plants need to grow. Through teacher-guided discussion, children will name fruits and vegetables typically harvested in the spring, summer, fall, and winter.

LIVE

HOME ACTIVITY

Instruct the children to “quiz” an adult to see if they know what fruits and vegetables are in season where they live.

Teacher's Notes

Background

For the greatest nutritional value and flavor choose fruits and vegetables harvested at the peak of their freshness. See the guide below to help you choose the freshest fruits and vegetables in season:

Summer- Beets, Blackberries, Blueberries, Broccoli, Chinese Cabbage, Corn Cucumber, Eggplant, Green Beans.

Nectarines, Peaches, Plums, Raspberries, Summer Squash, Tomatoes, Watermelon, Zucchini

Fall- Acorn Squash, Apples, Belgian Endive, Butternut Squash, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Figs, Garlic, Ginger, Grapes, Mushrooms, Parsnips, Pears, Pomegranate, Pumpkin, Quince, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard

Winter- Chestnuts, Grapefruit, Kale, Leeks, Oranges, Radicchio, Radishes, Rutabaga, Tangerines, Turnips

Spring- Apricots, Artichoke, Asparagus, Celeriac, Chives, Collards, Fava Beans, Fennel, Mango, Morels, Mustard Greens, New Potatoes, Pineapple, Rhubarb, Spinach, Spring Baby Lettuce Mixes, Strawberries, Sugar Snap and Snow Peas, Vidalia Onions, Watercress

10 Minute Lesson

Explain: *Plants need certain things in order to grow properly and produce the best quality fruits and vegetables that provide the best nutrients and flavor. Plants need:*

1. *Room to grow-the above ground portion of the plants need space so leaves can expand, and the below ground portion needs room for the roots to grow. Without enough room the plants would not be able to grow big enough, and make as many fruits and vegetables.*
2. *Temperature-Most plants like the temperatures that we like.*
3. *Light-Needed to make food for the plants*
4. *Water-Important for the plants' ability to make nutrients.*
5. *Air- Plants use carbon dioxide and make oxygen that you breathe. Air pollutants can damage plants.*
6. *Nutrients-Nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium*
7. *Time-It takes time to grow.*

Lead a discussion:

Ask the students: *What do you think would happen if tomato plant did not have enough water?*

Answer: *The tomato plant would dry up and not make as many tomatoes, or the tomatoes would not taste good and not be as juicy.*

Ask the students: *What would happen if strawberry plants were planted too close together?*

Answers: *If they are planted too close together the roots will not have enough room to spread out and there will not be enough room for the fruit to grow. So the plant would not be able to grow as many strawberries.*

Explain: *After making sure plants get all of their needs to grow, it is then time to harvest them. When fruits and vegetables are in season that they have the best nutritional value and flavor when eaten at harvest time.*

Ask the students what types of fruits and vegetables they think would be harvested in each of the four seasons. *Guide students by asking them to think about what kinds of fruits or vegetables might you eat at a summer picnic or in the fall around Halloween or Thanksgiving; tell them winter time is peak time for citrus fruits; tell them spring time is time for leafy green veggies.*

Answer: *Refer to list of seasonal product in the background information above.*

Introduce and explain the EAT Cafeteria Connection and LEARN Home Activity to the students.

Optional Enrichment Ideas

Provide children with a blank sheet of paper. Have them draw pictures of their favorite season and draw pictures of the fruits and vegetables in that season. Display the pictures in the classroom or in the school cafeteria. Bring in a few seasonal fruits or vegetables in for the students to taste.