



Grow It, Try It, Like It!

Preschool Fun With Fruits and Vegetables

The Basics:

Introduction and Resource Materials



Booklet



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MyPyramid for Preschoolers Poster

Introduction

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Welcome to...*Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables

Grow It, Try It, Like It! is a garden-themed nutrition education kit that introduces new fruits and vegetables to preschool age children. *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Team Nutrition. Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. The goal of Team Nutrition is to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits through nutrition education based on the principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *MyPyramid* Food Guidance System. To learn more about Team Nutrition and nutrition in child care go to the Team Nutrition Web site at teamnutrition.usda.gov and the Healthy Meals Resource System Web site at nal.usda.gov/Childcare.

Because the routine food choices of young children are determined by their families and adult care givers, *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* links activities at child care centers with resources for use at home. Children are encouraged to try new fruits and vegetables again and again throughout this delightful resource. Children touch, smell, and taste new fruits and vegetables. Children also learn that fruits and vegetables are grown from plants or trees in the ground. Planting activities help children connect the delicious food choices at the table with the different growing conditions and plants that produce fruits and vegetables.

The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* list fruits and vegetables as foods to encourage for increased consumption as part of a healthy eating plan among the general population of the United States. Most Americans, including young children, need to eat a more colorful variety of fruits and vegetables (especially dark green and orange vegetables) more often. Early childhood presents a unique opportunity to influence food acceptance and preferences that have the potential to influence health over the lifespan. Introducing a variety of fruits and vegetables in positive, engaging activities increases the likelihood that young children will taste and eat a wider variety of these health-promoting foods.

Current national health concerns link increased fruit and vegetable intakes over a lifetime with reduced risk of developing diseases such as some types of cancer and heart disease. Eating fruits and vegetables is also linked to a healthy body weight and is one dietary strategy to help reduce rates of obesity. The increased incidence of overweight and obesity among Americans, including young children, is a growing national health concern.

Young children have a natural curiosity about the world around them and a genuine desire to learn. The activities in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* tap into these characteristics of preschool children. The activities are designed with the needs of young children and child care providers and centers in mind. The pages are filled with engaging activities and easy-to-follow instructions. Central throughout the resource are three main concepts:

- Children can have fun while learning about nutrient and fiber-rich foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- Fruits and vegetables grow from plants or trees in the ground, are harvested, and are taken from the farm or orchard to grocery stores and farmers' markets.
- Fruits and vegetables can be prepared and eaten in many different and fun ways.

Grow It, Try It, Like It! is more than a resource for introducing fruits and vegetables to young children. *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* provides learning opportunities that contribute to each child's individual growth and development. Carefully crafted activities develop the entire child, body and mind, through:

- discussing ideas and developing vocabulary;
- enjoying physical movement;
- enhancing fine motor skills;
- reading children's literature;
- singing familiar music;
- viewing an entertaining and educational video;
- participating in hands-on science activities featuring plants; and
- creating individual art and crafts.

The learning activities engage children through all of their five senses—sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste. While learning about fruits and vegetables, children grow, develop, and learn about themselves. The activities help foster both an acceptance and enjoyment of new fruits and vegetables and an increase in self-confidence which can lead to higher self-esteem. The connections to home provide parents and guardians with ideas to further the growth and development of the entire family.

Grow It, Try It, Like It! is a natural addition to any child care program.

How to Use *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

Grow It, Try It, Like It! is organized around a garden theme, based at the imaginary Tasty Acres Farm. The map on pages 6-7 shows the imaginary garden at Tasty Acres Farm. Make copies of this map for each child to color as the different units are covered. This is a great way to chart progress through the six booklets.

Grow It, Try It, Like It! consists of seven booklets. Booklet 1 contains the Introduction, Teaching Guide, Garden Art and Crafts and Tool Shed Resources, Cool Puppy Pup DVD and the Supplemental Materials CD. Booklets 2 through 7 contain the activities for the six fruit and vegetable lessons.

Booklet 1 acknowledges those who helped in the kit's development and provides a description of the kit and Team Nutrition. The introduction also describes how to use the kit and how the kit is organized.

Teaching Guide explains why preschool nutrition education is important and how activities in this kit can enhance young children's overall developmental learning. This section identifies children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual activities during the preschool years, and how these might relate to food and nutrition. It explains what to expect of preschoolers and how to plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences. The Teaching Guide includes a section on strategies to encourage children to enjoy tasting new foods.

Garden Art and Crafts allow you to select an art and craft or two for each unit to help reinforce what the children have learned about fruits and vegetables. The overview page gives tips for creating successful projects and ideas for harvesting fun month after month. The Art and Crafts chart connects the art and crafts to the activities in the lessons.

Tool Shed Resources are materials designed to increase the variety of teaching opportunities within each lesson. Be sure to spend time reviewing the resources and select the ones that will work best for your child care program.

Introduction Letter to Parents. Sow the seeds of success! Send this letter home to families before starting the first unit.

Hand Washing/Polite Tasting Guides. Raise a crop of great hand washers and prune back the chances of choosy eaters with these guides. Send a copy home with the introduction letter to have families support the early growth of these two great habits.

Make a Mystery Box/Bag. Construct a simple mystery box or bag with these easy instructions.

Tips for Using a Mystery Box/Bag. This resource provides tips to make the most of the Mystery Box/Bag activity.

Ten Terrific Ways to Serve. This list of 10 ideas for serving each fruit and vegetable at meals and snacks makes menu planning a breeze.

A Harvest of Books. Reap the rewards of reading books about fruits and vegetables to children.

Green Thumb Guides. Easy-to-follow tips for growing plants practically anywhere. Look for these hints sprinkled throughout the unit lesson plan pages in addition to the Tool Shed resources.

Fruit and Vegetable Drawings and Blackline Masters. All the print resources necessary to produce fun-filled activities in each fruit and vegetable unit.

MyPyramid for Preschoolers Coloring Page. Give children a chance to color their very own MyPyramid for Preschoolers.

CD 1. Cool Puppy Pup DVD This entertaining and informative video features an opening segment that features all of the six fruits and vegetables and six additional segments, one for each fruit and vegetable at Tasty Acres Farm. Cool Puppy Pup, from the Tickle Your Appetite nutrition education resource, returns as host.

CD 2. The CD contains a PDF version of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Education Materials including activity sheets and Power Panther Songs, and a list of Web sites containing information and valuable resources for the child care community.

MyPyramid for Preschoolers Poster This poster introduces healthful food and physical activity choices.

Booklets 2 through 7 are named for each featured fruit and vegetable - Crookneck Squash Row, Spinach Lane, Sweet Potato Hill, Cantaloupe Corner, Peach Tree Orchard, and The Strawberry Patch.

What's Inside is the table of contents at the beginning of each booklet. It provides the pages where the lesson activities can be found.

Planning Chart gives ideas on how to fit all the activities, art, and crafts into a week's worth of fun. If time is limited, trim the activities to fit your schedule. One or two choices from Section A, an activity from Section B, the video from Section C, and the Section D activities combine nicely for a starter garden experience. The Words to Grow that appear throughout the lessons link the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* lesson plans to other areas of the preschool curriculum.

Section A hands-on activities introduce the fruit or vegetable to the children through exploration and tasting.

Section B planting activities focus on how the fruit or vegetable grows.

When To Start the Planting Activities: Timing for Peak Season

Check with your local nurseries, orchards, and farms to plan field trips to see as many of the fruits and vegetables grown at Tasty Acres Farm as possible. Generally speaking,

- Strawberries and spinach are spring and early summer crops;
- Cantaloupe, crookneck squash, and peaches are summer and late summer crops; and
- Sweet potatoes are early fall and fall crops.

Growing all or some of the fruits and vegetables in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* provides children with fun-filled growing seasons. Check with local garden experts to determine the right month to start each plant indoors or for when small plant starts are available at nurseries.

Section C activities feature singing, dancing, reading, and an educational video.

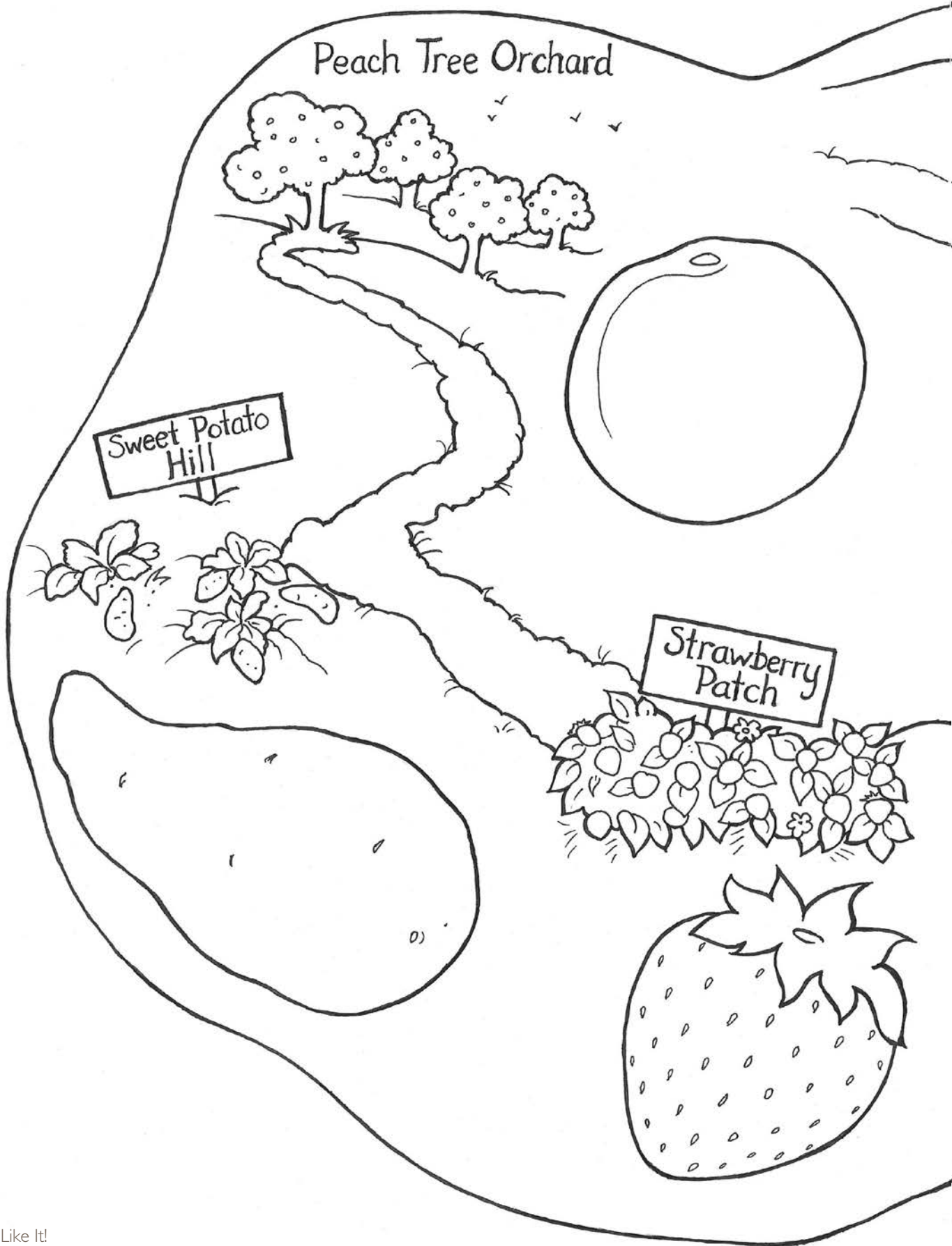
Section D nutrition education activities include an introduction to *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* and a physical activity to try with the children. Tasting opportunities reinforce that each fruit or vegetable can be eaten in a variety of ways.

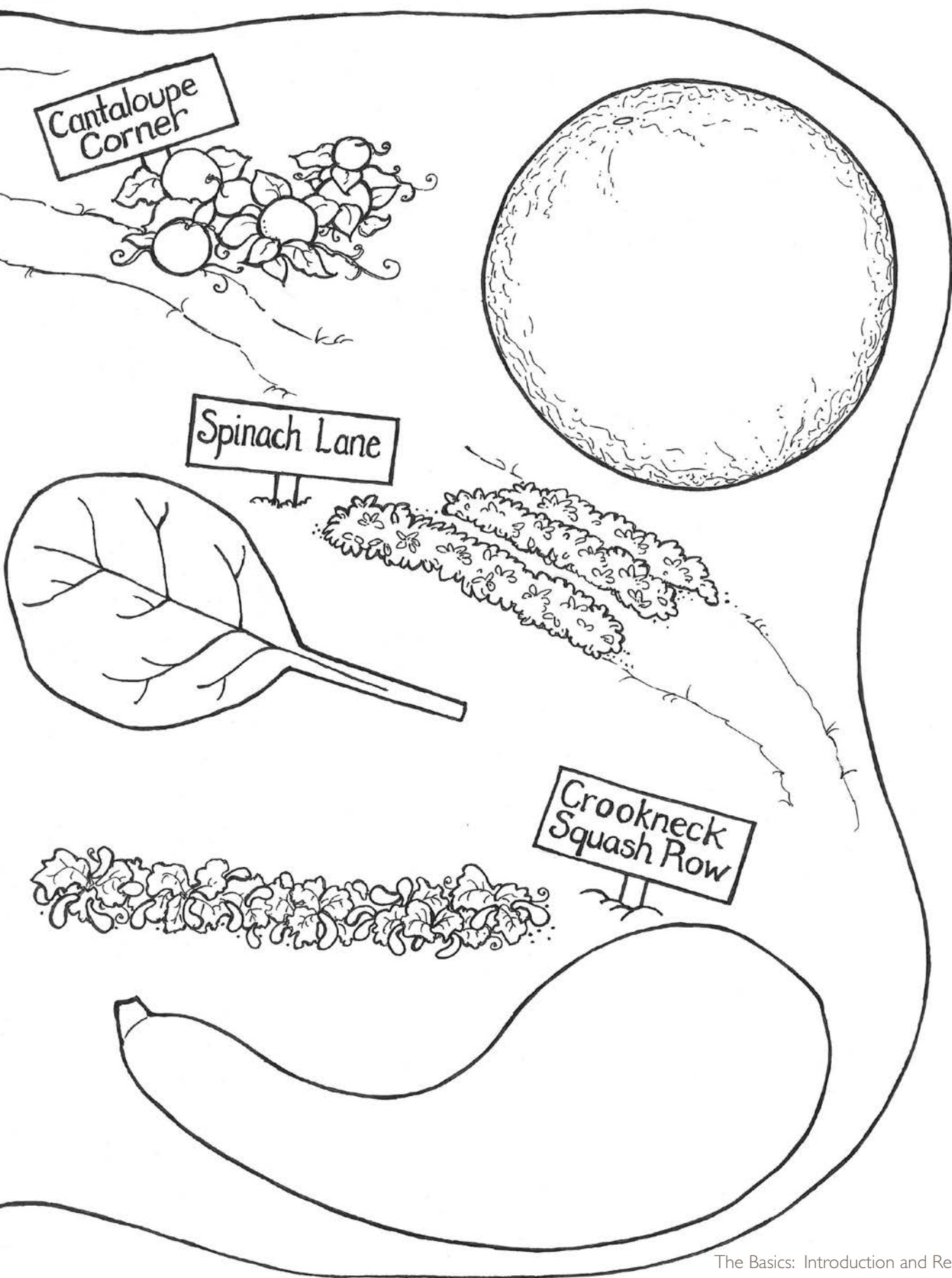
Section Components:

- **Activity Pages** are designed to provide easy-to-read sections and are sprinkled with helpful tips. Designed to match the developmental abilities of most 3- to 5-year-olds, the activities modify easily to meet children's skills and abilities.
- **Objectives** are listed at the beginning of each activity for easy reference.
- **Materials Needed and What to Do Ahead of Time** provide a checklist of items needed and helpful hints for organizing time and materials.
- **Activity Connections to Snack or Mealtime** helps grow great tasters by adding more tasting options throughout the day. When food tasting is not part of the activity, use these suggestions for snack or mealtime as follow-up.
- **The Ten Terrific Ways To Serve** resource in the Tool Shed bursts with flavorful, easy ways to offer the fruits and vegetables through meals and snacks.
- **Words To Grow** help plant the seeds of a varied vocabulary. Children grow many different skills and abilities through these units.

Growing at Home Materials keep parents informed about what their children are learning during the day. Each set promotes continued growth at home through child/parent centered activities and recipes.

Map of the Garden at Tasty Acres Farm





Teaching Guide

Nutrition Education Guide: Providing Positive Food and Nutrition Experiences for Preschool Children Ages 3 to 5

Why a Preschool Nutrition Education Program Is Important

Early Nutrition and Food Experiences Have Lasting Impact

Preschool children have a healthy curiosity about themselves, their growing bodies, and the world around them. This curiosity leads to the early development of food habits, preferences, and attitudes that will carry them through to adulthood. Therefore, it is important to provide a variety of positive food experiences at an early age.

Seize this opportunity for learning! Children are fascinated by activities that involve them and provide information about their world. Helping them discover where food comes from: how it grows; how it looks, tastes, feels, sounds, and smells; and even how it changes when prepared, opens their minds to the variety of food choices. For instance, letting children help or watch as sweet potatoes are mashed while asking “where do sweet potatoes come from?” stimulates their natural curiosity and involvement with food.

Helping young children grow and develop new skills is one of the most rewarding aspects of working with this age group. Preschool children (ages 3 to 5) are growing at an amazing rate—physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Their bodies and learning comprehension are continually developing as they begin to formulate attitudes, beliefs, and tastes that will last their entire lives.

The process of discovering new foods, learning about where food comes from, and preparing food with others provides many valuable learning experiences. Incorporating food and food-related activities into nutrition education helps preschool children develop a positive relationship with food and nutrition. The early nutrition adventures described in this kit can influence children’s lifelong food habits and attitudes about food.

Food-Related Activities Enhance Overall Developmental Learning

Children between the ages of 3 and 5 are growing and developing almost every part of their person, including small and gross motor skills, ability to learn and understand, and self-esteem. Well-planned activities can enhance this process by providing age-appropriate experiences that give children an opportunity to exercise new skills and tackle new challenges.

Encourage the child to:

Develop small motor skills by helping children:

- Hold and manipulate utensils;
- Pour, stir, and shake;
- Put things in the “right” place; and
- Sort, glue and paste, and do other tasks.

Learn simple math skills through:

- Measuring;
- Counting; and
- Following steps and sequence activities such as those required in planting seeds and caring for plants, playing games with sequential steps, or preparing a snack together.

Learn science concepts by:

- Observing that seeds need soil, water, sunlight, and time to grow into plants.
- Have children observe how a seedling develops and predict how large the plant will grow.

Learn food safety habits and cleanliness by:

- Talking to the children about washing their hands and stress the importance of hand washing before eating or working with food; and
- Letting children see foods being washed with water before eating or preparing.

Develop self-esteem and independence by:

- Talking with children about their preferences and the characteristics of a variety of foods such as color, shape, texture, taste, etc.

Nutrition Education Activities in Child Care

Nutrition education activities for preschool children should:

- Encourage children to eat a greater variety of foods for better nutrition.
- Encourage children to use all of their senses to explore different foods.
- Help introduce children to the basic sources of foods such as animals and plants.

The process of discovering new foods, learning about where food comes from, and preparing food with others provides many valuable learning experiences.

Ready To Learn: Planning Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences

The activities in this kit are designed to be fun and educational for children ages 3 to 5 years-old, taking into consideration the sometimes wide span in motor and language skills among these ages. The activities are not competitive and are achievable so that all children learn and none can fail. In addition, the activities take into account a variety of skill levels within the range of abilities of children in this age group.

What to expect of preschool children...and how adults can provide appropriate and positive food and nutrition experiences.

Activities with young children are both a delight and a challenge. These general principles will help ensure success:

- Keep ideas simple and use a single concept at a time.
- Provide activities that are concrete and relevant to children's daily lives and the world around them.
- Plan activities and use age-appropriate language for young children.

Children reach predictable milestones throughout their early development. Knowledge of these milestones helps in planning experiences that meet children's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas. The table on the following page summarizes children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual abilities from 3 to 5 years-old. It explains how these activities might relate to food and nutrition.

Children reach predictable milestones throughout their early development. Knowledge of these milestones helps in planning experiences that meet children's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas.

Developmental Milestones	Three- to Four-Year Olds	Four- to Five-Year Olds
Physical Gross Motor Skills and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore freely. • Move from toddling to running smoothly. • Jump, stand on one foot. • Catch ball or bean bag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate freely. • Run with greater control. • Jump and hop with more coordination. • Throw ball with greater coordination and distance.
Fine Motor Skills and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snip edges of paper with blunt scissors. • Fold paper and manipulate Play Dough. • Scribble with crayons, paint brushes, and markers with some control. • Manipulate puzzle pieces, put pegs in board, and string beads. • Eat with help. Prefer eating finger foods. Drink from cups. (Note: spills are normal.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can cut with scissors. • Manipulate small objects; move cursor into desired place on computer screen. • Begin to print names, create drawings or collages. • Use smaller and greater number of puzzle pieces. • Eat with less mess and spills. Use fork and spoon. Manipulate packages and containers.
Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select activities from limited choices. • Want to “do it” themselves. • Often able to separate from Mother. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate own activities. • Use self-help skills (take care of own needs). • Willing to move into new situations.
Relating to Other Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in solitary as well as parallel play. • Begin to share and take turns. • Help other children in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasingly sociable. Play cooperatively for sustained periods. • Play interactively with increased imagination. Share and cooperate well. • Use compromise to solve conflicts with others.
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and experiment with new ways to do things. • Play is dramatic and solitary; also model grown-up activities (play house, grocery shopping). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use objects more imaginatively. • Interact with peers in imaginative play in and outside the home. • Expand play to world around them. Play for longer periods with greater detail.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy frequent talking. Speak in 3- to 5-word sentences. • Understand language (“receptive”) long before speaking (“expressive language”). • Describe color, shape, and texture of food, if present. • Enjoy listening to stories. • Enjoy hearing others sing. Clap; may sing along. • Imitate adults and other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask “how” and “why” questions. • Play with language (rhyme, make up verse and song). • Describe color, shape, and texture of food in greater detail. • Speak clearly and express selves to others about experiences, interests, and needs. • Enjoy singing. • Learn new words easily by imitating.
Learning Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, identify, and sort objects. • Learn by doing; need concrete experiences, understand only what they can see, smell, taste, and touch and other concrete acts. • Discriminate different sounds. • Match like objects. • Understand relationship between written and spoken words. • React to entire stimulus rather than individual parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sequencing and ordering of objects and events. • Also learn by doing. Apply new information to new experiences. • Begin to distinguish letter sounds. • Distinguish greater visual detail. • Have longer attention span. • Can follow more complex directions.
Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitate trying new foods. • Verbalize food preferences. • Eat independently with some help. • Easily distracted in groups. • Eat using mostly fingers. Use spoon; drink from cup. Ask adults for more helpings of food and drink when desired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to experiment with new foods. Take more than they can eat. • Initiate new food selections. • Require less help at the table. • Eat more comfortably in groups. Able to concentrate. • Use fork and spoon. Pour own juice.

What To Expect of Preschool Children Emotionally

Children ages 3 to 5 are sometimes shy and withdrawn. This is because they are still very self-focused. Their ability to do things for themselves results in a desire to work independently. It is important to gauge your expectations of these children appropriately so that you do not expect more than is realistic. Young children often test the limits and will push to see how far they can go. Child care providers should set clear limits and firm boundaries.

Children are:

- increasingly self-aware and self-focused;
- easily discouraged;
- enjoy praise;
- developing self-esteem;
- gaining independence;
- beginning to accept responsibility;
- eager to actively participate in things that interest them;
- proud of individual and group achievements; and
- sometimes unable to express their needs and feelings with words.

Enchanted with their growing abilities, preschoolers test these skills and strive to see what they can do that they couldn't do before.

What Child Care Providers Can Do:

- **Encourage children to complete an activity individually.** When children are actively involved they are more likely to remain interested and take pride in the finished product, and self-esteem is enhanced. The activities described in this kit all provide an opportunity for a child to begin and complete a task, gaining a sense of accomplishment. When you develop new activities, be sure to build in this type of reward and plan so that there is enough time available for children to complete the activity.
- **Let children take responsibility; divide up small tasks.** For example, each child might choose a different vegetable to add to a salad or contribute a picture to the *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* poster.
- **Provide “I made it myself” or “I tried it” stickers or buttons.** This gives children concrete and public recognition of their achievement.

What To Expect of Preschool Children Physically

Young children are in the process of developing both their gross and fine motor skills. Enchanted with their growing abilities, preschoolers test these skills and strive to see what they can do that they couldn't do before. Related to this is an excitement about learning about their bodies and becoming aware of different body parts and what they can do with them. For instance, as they learn about the different parts of their faces, they will be interested in how different features (eyes, nose, mouth) help them to eat and enjoy food.

Children are:

- testing their rapidly improving physical skills;
- refining and expanding their gross motor skills such as hopping, skipping, and jumping;
- continuing to develop their fine motor skills such as drawing, coloring, using scissors; and
- becoming more aware of their bodies.

Young children are very accepting of other children, which is helpful in creating group activities.

What Child Care Providers Can Do:

- **Plan activities that require a range of motor skills.** Remember - each child has individual qualities! Regardless of age, his/her motor development might vary. This is a great opportunity for teamwork. One child might choose pictures of fruits and vegetables while another child might be in charge of pasting pictures onto a healthy food poster.
- **Try these small motor skill-related guidelines:**
 - **For beginners:** pouring water, juice, or milk; peeling a banana; mixing foods in a bowl; tearing lettuce; watering plants; sorting pictures; putting things in containers; coloring, folding, etc.
 - **As they develop:** spreading cream cheese; squeezing an orange for its juice; planting seeds; pasting or drawing pictures related to food on paper, etc.
- **Plan activities that foster large muscle and gross motor skill development.** Games that involve physical activity (such as skipping, hopping, jumping, or other body movements) done to music are favorites with children ages 3 to 5.

What to Expect of Preschool Children Socially

Young children are very accepting of other children, which is helpful in creating group activities. Their ability to interact with other children will depend upon the amount of experience they have had in groups, how naturally shy they are, and their mood on any given day. Younger children will tend to prefer to work independently. As they get a bit older they will work more collaboratively with other children.

Children are:

- becoming interested in the similarities and differences between objects;
- becoming interested in the similarities and differences between people;
- developing interactive skills; and
- beginning to work cooperatively in groups.

What Child Care Providers Can Do

- **Plan activities that encourage children to work together.** Examples include group tasting, creating a salad bar together, and having one child choose a picture and another paste it to a *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* poster. These all help develop social skills.
- **Provide an opportunity for children to care for something.** For example, when conducting a planting activity with seeds, children will learn about how important care and nurturing are for the development of the plant. Once the seeds are planted (using small motor skills), explain to children that they will need to take care of their growing plants. Explain that watering and caring for a plant makes it grow healthy and strong (just as when they themselves eat well and are cared for, they grow healthy and strong).
- **Allow time for groups of children to talk about foods.** Children can share experiences while an adult records their findings on a large pad of paper to share with their parents or other children. Talk about interesting foods such as a pineapple, or explore the inside/outside of a cantaloupe, pumpkin, or coconut.
- **If time permits, let children clean up together.** Cleaning is an important and necessary part of learning about food, and it helps children feel good about themselves. This concept is important for all projects, including crafts, planting, and food activities.

The most important thing about young children's capacity to learn is that they learn by doing; they must have concrete, hands-on experience to learn.

What To Expect of Preschool Children Intellectually

The most important thing about young children's capacity to learn is that they learn by doing; they *must* have concrete, hands-on experience to learn. They are simply unable to grasp abstract concepts and ideas. Further, it is difficult for them to draw inferences and leap from one idea to the next. However, their imaginations are active and can be engaged to help provide a learning experience. For example, dramatic play and imaginary games are popular and can be used to teach nutrition principles.

The chance to taste a food many times helps young children to grow into adventurous eaters.

Children are:

- Best able to learn by doing. They benefit from interactive, hands-on activities. Concrete activities help engage their imaginations and also help them to retain information.
- Interested in written and spoken language. They are becoming curious about letters and words.
- Interested in using “grown-up” things (i.e., real garden tools, utensils) or “pretend” grown-up things like child-size shopping carts, pretend money, gardening gloves, shopping carts, etc.
- Naturally interested in shapes, textures, smells, tastes, sounds, and colors. They like to sort and characterize.
- Increasingly better able to pay attention for longer spans of time as they get older. Four- and five-year-olds can stay focused longer than 3-year-olds.
- Becoming intensely involved in activities that capture their imagination, such as stories and dramatic play. Educational activities that engage their imagination will have more impact on learning and information retention.

What Child Care Providers Can Do:

- **Provide opportunities for dramatic play** such as play-acting, shopping in an imaginary or pretend grocery store, singing and dancing, and other imaginative activities.
- **Read stories** about where food comes from.
- **Encourage the emergent reader** by using pictures with words of foods from all of the food groups; use visual displays with associated words.
- **Provide opportunities (as much as possible) to experience real food** so children have concrete experiences of taste, touch, smell, etc.

Growing Great Tasters: Strategies for Food Tasting

Food tasting is deeply rooted into the activities of this resource. For some activities, the food tasting is suggested to occur at snack or mealtime rather than as part of the activity. The chance to taste a food many times helps young children to grow into adventurous eaters. Trying new foods may lead to better health and nutrition. Use the tips below to increase the number of great tasters your child care center creates.

Prepare To Grow. Involve the children and all their senses in exploring the fruit or vegetable first by using the Mystery Box/Bag, A Look Inside Tasting activities. Children are more likely to try a food they have explored.

Sow Seeds of Success. Teach the children the guidelines for polite food tasting (see Tool Shed Resources, page 44). Children will be more willing to try a food if they know it is okay to remove something they do not like rather than swallow. Never force a child to eat a food. Model how to politely decline to taste a food or use a napkin to remove the food from the mouth.

Seed and Re-seed. Plan to offer the food many different times. Studies show some children need to be offered a food up to five times before they will taste it. In addition, the food may need to be offered more than a dozen times before a child will choose to eat it at a meal. Do not give up - some seeds take longer to grow than others.

Start in Fertile Ground. Offer new foods first to children willing to try new things. Watching a peer eat a food can help the most reluctant eater bud into a food taster.

Be Still, Little Seed. For safety's sake, have the children eat while seated, not walking around. Moving while eating can increase the risk of choking.

Offer Bites, Not Bushels. Offer small tastes of a food at first. A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Portions need to be small enough for small mouths and large enough so a child has to chew the food. It is safer to have a piece that cannot be swallowed whole. Be prepared to offer more if a child desires to taste again.

Know the Growing Season. Fresh fruits and vegetables in season usually taste best and are less expensive. Produce may be available year round; peak flavor and value frequently coincide with the growing season. Frozen or canned foods offer an option for fruits and vegetables out of season. These options are also great choices for comparing to fresh.

Growing at Home Materials. Encourage parents to make the recipes in the Growing at Home activities with their children. When families prepare and eat foods together, young children are encouraged to try more foods. Let the parents know how much the children enjoyed tasting the food during the day.

Produce may be available year round; peak flavor and value frequently coincide with the growing season.

Garden Art and Crafts

Garden Art and Crafts add wheelbarrows of fun to the fruit and vegetable units of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Young, budding artists enjoy making these produce-focused projects. The more time children spend engaged with fruits and vegetables, the more they will remember about produce.

Be sure to check each unit's Plan for Organizing the Activities section for ways to work the art and crafts into the activities you plan. Each art and craft is written with a specific fruit or vegetable example. Branch out and get creative! Any fruit or vegetable can be used as a theme for a great art or craft project. Connections to Garden Art and Crafts are listed on several activities in each unit; look for these ideas to expand the art and craft activities into daily lessons.

Little hands and fingers develop strength and fine art skills at different rates. Feel free to trim back the activities to match the skills of the children. A helpful adult hand may be all that is needed to stem the frustration budding artists can experience as they try new tasks. Use the resources in the Tool Shed Resources to create stencils, sponges, and other hand tools for children to use. For example, copy images of fruits and vegetables onto crack-and-peel paper. Attach the paper to foam sheets, sturdy cardboard, or thin plastic. Trim around the edges to create a set of models to trace.

Use the right tool for the job. The activities suggest different types of art supplies from crayons to pastel paints. Spend some time at a local art and craft store to identify the best tools, especially for young children. Use the varieties that you prefer.

Keep costs contained. Create a storage bin of supplies (e.g., cardboard, styrofoam trays, paper bags, newspapers and magazines, envelopes, outdated stationary) to keep costs low. Encourage families to contribute items.

Little hands and fingers develop strength and fine art skills at different rates. Feel free to trim back the activities to match the skills of the children.



Garden Art and Crafts are great rainy day activities. Keep a supply of items handy for days when the weather changes your outdoor plans. Reinforce what the children have learned about fruits and vegetables throughout the year. View segments from the Cool Puppy Pup video to refresh memories.

Gifts from the garden are a snap with Garden Art and Crafts. Garden Art and Craft Activities are shown in italics. Develop hybrid gifts by combining different projects. Below are some examples:

Keep a supply of items handy for days when the weather changes your outdoor plans.

- Put a bag of potting soil and a seed circle (see *Make a Seed Tape*, the Tool Shed Resources, page 54) in a Painted Pot. Add a personalized Row Marker and Garden Scene Note Card. Place in a Decorated Garden Bag or wrap in Stamped Wrapping Paper.
- Combine a set of Garden Gloves, a Garden Stone, and seed tape or a small plant with growing instructions on a Row Marker. Place in a Decorated Garden Bag or wrap in Stamped Wrapping Paper.
- Package Produce Placemats and a cookbook compiled from the Growing at Home recipes for a kitchen gift.



Grow Your Own Great Ideas!

Read this bountiful list of Garden Art and Crafts. Let the ideas germinate while you plan your lessons from *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*



Garden Art:

Decorated Garden Bags

Create paper bags with images of fruits and vegetables, perfect to send a seedling home or carry a special snack.

Garden Bookmarks

Mark favorite stories and recipes with produce-illustrated bookmarks.

Produce Placemats

Set a colorful table with placemats promoting fruits and vegetables.

Garden Scene Note Cards

Cultivate a desire to write with hand-made note cards from the garden.

Tasty Acres Mobile

Set into motion great foods—fruits and vegetables!

Stamped Wrapping Paper

Give presents a special look or make a bushel basket full for gift giving.



Garden Crafts:

Row Markers

Perk up any garden spot or container with markers to show what is yet to grow.

Seed Art

Create an original design with seeds and more.

Painted Pots

Decorate clay pots for use in a container garden or for gift giving.

Garden Stones

Step into the wonderful world of plants with personalized garden stones.

Garden Gloves

Create excitement for young green thumbs with garden gloves of their very own! These gloves make a great handmade gift to cherish.

Make a Scarecrow



Celebrate the harvest of learning by making a very special garden friend.



Art and Crafts Chart

Garden Art or Craft Activity Name	Fruit or Vegetable Activities	Fruit Activities	Vegetable Activities
<p>Art Decorated Garden Bag</p>	<p>Cantaloupe B2 or B3 See Garden Art and Craft Decorated Garden Bag, page 27, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Strawberry A3 Make extra chocolate strawberries to send home in a Strawberry Decorated Garden Bag. See Strawberry Growing at Home #1.</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash B2 Send home the crookneck squash seeds each child planted in a cup in a Crookneck Squash-Decorated Garden Bag. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 27.</p>
<p>Art Garden Bookmark</p> 	<p>Crookneck Squash A1 or A2 See Garden Art and Craft Garden Bookmark, page 28, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Cantaloupe A1 or A2 Make Cantaloupe-Decorated Garden Bookmarks. Glue cantaloupe seeds in a design on the bookmark. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 28.</p>	<p>Spinach A1 or A2 Make Spinach-Decorated Garden Bookmarks. Trace around a baby spinach leaf on a bookmark. Then, hold the leaf over the image with a piece of plastic wrap and rub the plastic over the leaf with the round end of wooden craft stick. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 28.</p>
<p>Art Produce Placemats</p> 	<p>Peach D2 See Garden Art and Craft Produce Placemats, page 29, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Strawberry B3 Use the Pretend Strawberry Plant to decorate a Produce Placemat. Have the children add drawings of their favorite strawberry recipes. Laminate and use this placemat to review how strawberries grow and how we enjoy strawberries. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 29.</p>	<p>Sweet Potato B3 Use the Pretend Sweet Potato Plant to decorate a Produce Placemat. Use the individual plant option and attach the finished plant to one side of the placemat. Have the children add drawings of their favorite sweet potato recipes on the reverse side of the placemat. Laminate and use this reversible placemat to review how sweet potatoes grow and how we enjoy sweet potatoes. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 29.</p>

Garden Art or Craft Activity Name	Fruit or Vegetable Activities	Fruit Activities	Vegetable Activities
<p>Art Garden Scene Note Cards</p> 	<p>Spinach B1 See Garden Art and Craft Garden Scene Note Cards, page 30, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Cantaloupe B1, B2 or B3 Send a 'Can I Tell You What I Learned Today?' card featuring drawings of cantaloupe to parents or grandparents. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 30.</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash B2 or B3 Create a Crookneck Squash notecard to mail to a family member living in another town. Mail with a few seeds and growing instructions. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 30.</p>
<p>Art Tasty Acres Mobile</p> 	<p>Strawberry C1 or C2 See Garden Art and Craft Tasty Acres Mobile, page 31, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Peach B3, C1 or C2 Get double duty from the Make a Pretend Peach Tree activity—save the large peach to use in the mobile and add all the fruits and vegetables featured at Tasty Acres Farm. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 31.</p>	<p>Sweet Potato C1 or C2 Create a Sweet Potato Mobile; decorate the circles of the mobile with drawings of how sweet potatoes grow and favorite sweet potato recipes. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 31.</p>
<p>Art Stamped Wrapping Paper</p> 	<p>Sweet Potato A1 or A2 See Garden Art and Craft Stamped Wrapping Paper, page 33, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Peach (pit) A1 or A2 Save the pits from the Peach activities and use the pits to make Stamped Wrapping Paper. For a sparkling change, dip the pit in school glue, stamp on a Garden Scene Note Card, and sprinkle with glitter for a uniquely designed greeting card. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 32.</p>	<p>Spinach A1 or A2 Coat spinach leaves with different colors of green paint and press the leaves to paper. Create interesting designs. If desired, press leaves on smaller sheets of art paper to create a spinach art masterpiece to frame and display. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 32.</p>
<p>Craft Row Markers</p> 	<p>Cantaloupe B2 or B3 See Garden Art and Craft Row Markers, page 33, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Strawberry B2 or B3 Create a Row Marker for strawberry plants. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 33.</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash B2 or B3 Create a Row Marker for crookneck squash plants. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 33.</p>
<p>Craft Seed Art</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash B1 See Garden Art and Craft Seed Art, page 34, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Peach A1, A2 or B1 Decorate a peach shape with yellow, orange, and red seeds. Try popcorn and millet for yellow dye, pumpkin seeds for orange, and use red lentils for red. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 34.</p>	<p>Sweet Potato B1 Decorate a sweet potato shape with seeds. Use small white beans to show the eyes or buds of the potato. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 34.</p>

Garden Art or Craft Activity Name	Fruit or Vegetable Activities	Fruit Activities	Vegetable Activities
<p>Craft Painted Pots</p> 	<p>Peach B1 or B2 See Garden Art and Crafts Painted Pots, page 35, for a creative connection to this activity. Fill the pot with peach-scented potpourri for a unique gift.</p>	<p>Strawberry B2 Decorate a strawberry jar or large pot and plant strawberry starts in your custom creation. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 35. Or use current wording on A2 to connect this craft to the Strawberry Unit.</p>	<p>Spinach B3 Make a seed disc (see Make a Seed Tape, Tool Shed Resources, page 60) with spinach seeds; paint a pot with spinach leaves and the word spinach; add a bag of potting soil, and give as a Mother's or Father's day gift. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 35.</p>
<p>Craft Garden Stones</p>	<p>Spinach B2 or B3 See Garden Art and Crafts Garden Stones, page 36, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Peach B3 Make Peach Garden Stones; place the stones at the base of the Pretend Peach Tree. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 36.</p>	<p>Sweet Potato A1, A2, or B1 Make a Sweet Potato Garden Stone; find stones similar in shape to sweet potatoes and decorate. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 36.</p>
<p>Craft Gardening Gloves</p> 	<p>Strawberry A1 or A2 See Garden Art and Crafts Gardening Gloves, page 37, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Cantaloupe B2 or B3 Make Gardening Gloves with cantaloupe shapes an easy shape for little hands to draw and color. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 37.</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash B2 or B3 Make Gardening Gloves for growing crookneck squash—the squash stems and leaves are prickly and gloves can protect hands. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 37.</p>
<p>Craft Make a Scarecrow</p>	<p>Sweet Potato C1 or C2 See Garden Art and Crafts Make a Scarecrow, page 38, for a creative connection to this activity.</p>	<p>Cantaloupe C1 or C2 Decorate the scarecrow's pants with cantaloupe shapes and color with fabric paint. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 38.</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash C1 or C2 Cut a small crookneck squash in half so that the flat, cut surface can be dipped in paint while holding on to the outer portion of the squash. Stamp the curvy shape of crookneck squash on the clothing of the scarecrow in water proof paints. See Garden Art and Crafts, page 38.</p>

Decorated Garden Bags

Have the children draw the shape and color of fruits and/or vegetables on paper bags.

Activity Length: 15 minutes

The Activity

This example uses cantaloupe as the featured fruit.

- Seat the children at the table(s) with supplies.
- Show a picture of a cantaloupe to the children.
- Talk about how a cantaloupe looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - ▶ Review the shape (round) and colors (outside/tan with green lines and inside/orange with tan seeds) of a cantaloupe.
- Give each child a paper lunch bag and explain that they are going to decorate the bag with drawings of cantaloupe.
- Have the children draw at least one large circle on their lunch bag.
 - ▶ Instruct them to color the circle like a cantaloupe. Some children may choose to color the outside of the cantaloupe; some may depict the inside.
 - ▶ Children can also choose to draw and color pieces or wedges of cantaloupe.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.
- While tasting the featured fruit or vegetable at snack or mealtime, have the children think of uses for the Decorated Garden Bags just created.
- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Take it to a farmers' market, purchase a cantaloupe, and carry it home in the bag;
 - ▶ Give to a family member to take a cantaloupe snack to work or to a picnic;
 - ▶ Use as a gift bag for a present; and
 - ▶ Other ideas the children suggest.

Note: Use the sack for the child to take home the cantaloupe seed planted in a cup (Activity B2) or part of a cantaloupe seed tape (Activity B3).

Materials Needed

- Paper lunch bags—preferably white or with a panel of plain white paper, the size of the flat bag, securely attached to the front of the bag
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Drawings of fruits and/or vegetables (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- Fruit or vegetable to taste

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize materials.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Materials Needed

- White posterboard or sturdy paper cut into 3" x 9" strips
- Markers, crayons, pencils, and/or colored pencils
- Drawings of a fruit or vegetable (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- Laminating material for each bookmark

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize materials.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Garden Bookmarks

Have the children draw and color fruits or vegetables on bookmarks.

Activity Length: 15 minutes

The Activity

This example uses crookneck squash as the featured vegetable.

- Have each child seated at a table(s).
- Show a picture of a crookneck squash to the children.
 - ▶ Talk about how a crookneck squash looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - ▶ Review the shape (curved) and colors (light yellow outside and white inside with white seeds) of a crookneck squash.
- Give each child a paper strip. Ask them to pick up a pencil. Show them how to make a curve with their index finger. Show them how to turn their wrist to put the curved finger flat on their strip of paper (see drawing below to help explain). Explain that each child is going to trace around the curve of their finger to make the curve of a crookneck squash and then lift their hand and draw the letter U or a loop to make the rest of the squash.



- Tell the children to:
 - ▶ Color the shape like a crookneck squash.
 - ▶ Decide to color the outside or inside of the crookneck squash.
 - ▶ Draw more crookneck squash of different sizes on the bookmark, if desired.
- Have each child write their name on the back of the bookmarks. Collect and laminate the finished bookmarks.
- Have the children wash hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While tasting the fruit or vegetable at snack or mealtime, have the children think of uses for the bookmarks they just created. Use the opportunity to emphasize the importance of reading.

- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Use to mark favorite recipes in a cookbook;
 - ▶ Give to a family member with a book;
 - ▶ Use as a bookmark themselves;
 - ▶ Other ideas the children suggest.

Produce Placemats

Have the children draw and color fruits or vegetables on a placemat.

Activity Length: 15-20 minutes

The Activity

This example uses a peach as the featured fruit.

- Have each child seated at a table(s).
- Show a picture of a peach to the children.
 - ▶ Talk with the children about how a peach looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - ▶ Review the shape (round) and colors of a peach (outside/ yellow to orange to red, inside/creamy yellow with a little bit of red).
- Give each child paper. Explain that they are going to decorate a placemat with drawings of a peach or peaches.
- Ask the children to draw at least one large circle on their placemat. Instruct the children to color the circle like a peach.
- Some children may choose to color the outside of the peach; some may depict the inside. Children may also choose to draw peach slices or a peach tree.
- Have each child write his/her name on the placemat.
- Collect the finished placemats and laminate.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While tasting the fruit or vegetable at snack or mealtime, have the children think of uses for the placemats they just created.

- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Use it at the center or preschool;
 - ▶ Give it to a family member;
 - ▶ Use it at home;
 - ▶ Other ideas the children suggest.

Materials Needed

- 11" x 14" white posterboard or construction-weight paper, one per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Drawings of fruit or vegetables (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize materials.
- Arrange to laminate the finished placemats.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Materials Needed

- Plain white note cards/ envelopes
- Slips of paper printed with “This Card Hand Made by”
- Paper clips, one per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Drawings of fruit or vegetables (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize materials.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Garden Scene Note Cards

Have the children draw and color fruit or vegetable images on note cards.

Activity Length: 15 minutes

The Activity

This example uses spinach as the featured vegetable.

- Have each child seated at the table(s) with supplies.
- Show a picture of a spinach leaf to the children.
 - ▶ Talk with the children about what spinach looks like.
 - ▶ Review the shape (round at one end, coming to a point) and color of spinach (green).
- Have each child take a plain note card. Explain that they are going to decorate it with drawings of spinach.
- Make sure the children know to leave the inside of the card blank.
- Ask them to draw one large leaf or more on their card. Instruct them to color the leaf like a spinach leaf.
- After cards are made, help each child write his/her name on the line on the slip of paper. Attach the slip to the child's card(s) and envelope(s) with a paperclip.
- When finished, have children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While tasting the fruit or vegetable at snack or mealtime, have the children think of uses for the Note Cards just created.

- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Give to a parent to write a favorite recipe on the card;
 - ▶ Give to a family member as a gift;
 - ▶ Use to write a thank-you note or letter; and
 - ▶ Other ideas the children suggest.

Tasty Acres Mobile

Have the children make a mobile of fruit and vegetable images.

Variation: Expand this activity to six circles with a drawing of each fruit and vegetable featured in this kit drawn on a circle. Draw a favorite food made with that fruit or vegetable on the reverse side of the circle. Add another length of string cut 16" long to each string set.

Activity Length: 15 minutes

The Activity

This example uses strawberry as the featured fruit.

- Have each child seated at table(s).
- Show them a picture of a strawberry.
 - ▶ Talk with the children about what a strawberry looks like.
 - ▶ Review with the children the shape (heart-like) and color of strawberries (red with green leaf cap).
- Give five paper circles with holes prepunched to each child. Show them how to position the circle with the hole at the top before beginning to draw.
- Have the children draw pictures of strawberries on their circles of paper.

Option: Have the children draw favorite foods made with strawberries on some circles or on the back of the strawberry drawings.

- Pass out five pieces of string in varying lengths to each child. Help them thread the string through the hole at the top of their pictures. Tie the string to the picture securely. Then tie the strings with the pictures onto the plastic hangers. Help the children balance their mobiles.
- As the mobiles are assembled, talk with the children about how strawberries look, feel, and taste.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While eating the fruit or vegetable at snack or mealtime, talk about how the fruit or vegetable grows.

Materials Needed

- Drawings of fruit or vegetable (see the Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- 4" circles cut from white construction or poster board-weight paper, five per child
- Plastic hangers, one per child
- Pieces of string cut 6", 8", 10", 12", and 14" long, one set of each length per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Hole Punch

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize the materials.
- Cut and organize sets of string lengths.
- Cut circles of paper and punch hole in each circle $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in from an edge.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Materials Needed

- Sweet potatoes or squash cut crosswise into halves or thirds (not the long way) with smooth flat surfaces
OR
- Large spinach leaves to coat with paint

Option: cut a design with a sharp knife in one surface or cut the pieces into shapes

- Acrylic craft paint (various colors)
- Paper plates for paints
- Large sheets of light-colored paper, at least one per child
- Smocks or bibs, if desired
- Table coverings, if desired

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize materials.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Stamped Wrapping Paper

The children make stamped wrapping paper with vegetable designs.

Activity Length: 20 minutes

The Activity

This example uses sweet potato as the featured vegetable.

- Have each child seated at the table(s) with supplies.
- Give each child a piece of paper.
- Show the children how to dip a potato piece in the paint.
- Stamp the painted portion of the potato onto the paper.
If using spinach leaves, coat leaf in paint and press to paper, repeat until desired pattern is created.
- Repeat stamping with different colors and shapes if desired.
- Set the papers on a flat surface to dry.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

At snack or mealtime, talk about how vegetables grow.

Row Markers

The children draw and color fruits or vegetables on row markers.

Activity Length: 15 minutes

The Activity

This example uses cantaloupe as the featured fruit.

- Seat the children at the table(s).
- Ask the children “What is a garden?” Explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits grow. Explain that sometimes people grow fruits and vegetables in gardens in their yards. Fruits and vegetables also grow on farms in large areas of land called fields.
- Tell the children that row markers are helpful when plants are young and little. Row markers help mark what is growing in a spot until the plant is big enough to be recognized by its leaves, vines, flowers, and other plant parts. Explain that today they will make a row marker for a cantaloupe plant.
- Show the children a picture of a cantaloupe.
 - ▶ Talk with the children about what a cantaloupe looks like.
 - ▶ Review the shape (round) and color of a cantaloupe (outside/tan, inside/orange).
- Give each child a piece of paper. Have them draw at least one large circle on their piece of paper. They may choose to draw more than one circle and wedges. Ask them to color their circle like a cantaloupe. They may choose to color whole or cut cantaloupe.
- Help the children glue a piece of corrugated cardboard to the back center of their cantaloupe picture. When dry, push a wooden stick into the center of the piece of corrugated cardboard.
- Use strips of the clear packing tape to cover the white paper to waterproof the sign. Wrap the tape around the back of the sign to waterproof both sides of the paper. The tape will also help hold the cardboard and stick in place.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While eating cantaloupe at snack or mealtime, talk about what cantaloupe plants need to grow.

Materials Needed

- Drawings of fruit or vegetable (see the Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- 2- by 4-inch rectangles of corrugated cardboard, one per child
- 4- by 6-inch pieces of white construction-weight paper or posterboard, one per child
- Glue sticks or bottles, one for every 2-3 children
- Crayons, colored pencils, and markers
- Wooden craft sticks, one per child
- Clear packing tape on a dispenser or scissors to cut tape

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize the materials.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Materials Needed

- Drawings of fruit or vegetable (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- Dyed or natural squash seeds
- Other seeds (melon, bird, fruit, etc.)
- Box lid, piece of cardboard, or Styrofoam tray for each child
- Pencil for each child
- White glue and wooden craft sticks or paint brushes
- Rice, unpopped corn, dried peas and beans (optional)

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize the materials
- Option:** Draw large fruit/vegetable images on trays for children.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Ten Terrific Ways..., Tool Shed Resources, pages 48-49).

Seed Art

The children decorate a fruit or vegetable shape with seeds.

Activity Length: 15-20 minutes

The Activity

This example uses crookneck squash as the featured vegetable.

- Have each child seated at a table(s).
- Show a picture of a crookneck squash to the children and keep it on display.
 - ▶ Talk with them about how a crookneck squash looks.
 - ▶ Review with them the shape (curved neck and oblong body) and color of crookneck squash (outside/yellow, inside/white with white seeds).
- Have the children draw a crookneck squash on their box lid or tray. Use the method described in Garden Bookmarks if they have trouble drawing crookneck squash freehand.
- Help the children spread white glue with a wooden craft stick or paint brush in one section at a time of their picture.
- Have them press seeds into the glue.
- Continue to spread glue on a section and press seeds into the glue until the entire image is covered with seeds.
- Lay the pictures on a flat surface until the glue has dried.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

Talk about how the fruit or vegetable grows while eating it at snack or mealtime.

Painted Pots

The children paint and/or color images of fruits or vegetables on clay pots.

Activity Length: 20-30 minutes

The Activity

This example uses peaches as the featured fruit.

- Have each child seated at a table(s).
- Show a picture of a peach to the children and keep it on display.
- Review with the children the shape (round) and color of peach (light yellow to orange).
- Give a pot to each child.
- Using a pencil, help each child draw a peach or peach tree design on the pot with a pencil.

Note: Oil pastels are permanent so it is best to draw the image with a pencil first.

- Help the children to use the oil pastels to color their peach or peach tree on their pot.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While tasting the fruit or vegetable at snack or mealtime, have the children think of uses for the pots they just created.

- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Use it at the center or preschool for a container garden;
 - ▶ Give it to a family member filled with peach-scented potpourri;
 - ▶ Use it at home; or
 - ▶ Other ideas the children suggest.

Materials Needed

- Clean, dry, 6-inch-high terra-cotta pots, one for each child, or do a large pot as a group project for a container garden
- Pencils
- Oil pastels (available at art supply stores)
- Drawings of fruit or vegetable (see the Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- Acrylic paint and brushes, optional for painting pots ahead of time
- Smocks or large bibs to protect the children's clothing, if desired

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize the materials.
- Paint the pots with acrylic paint for a bright base, if desired.
- Arrange for adult volunteers to help the children paint.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Tool Shed Resources, Ten Terrific Ways..., pages 48-49).

Materials Needed

- Drawings of fruit or vegetable (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- Smooth, round stones at least 4 inches in diameter
- Acrylic paints, light base colors and green for leaves
- Paint brushes, one per child
- Paper plates for paint
- Can of spray clear shellac to seal and waterproof painted stones
- Puffy paint (optional)—puffy paints have an interesting texture
- Smocks or large bibs for each child, if desired

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize the materials
- Arrange for a well-ventilated spray area away from the children.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form for snack or at mealtime (see Tool Shed Resources, Ten Terrific Ways..., pages 48-49).

Garden Stones

The children draw and color fruits and vegetables on garden stones.

Activity Length: 20-30 minutes

The Activity

This example uses spinach as the featured vegetable.

- Have each child seated at a table(s) or on the ground.
- Ask the children “What is a garden?” If they do not know, explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits, like spinach grow. Explain that sometimes people grow fruits and vegetables in gardens in their yards. Fruits and vegetables also grow on farms in large areas of land called fields.
- Tell the children that garden stones are used to mark the place where different kinds of fruits and vegetables are planted in a garden. Explain that today they will make a garden stone decorated with a spinach leaf.
- Show a picture of spinach to the children and keep it on display.
 - ▶ Talk with the children about how spinach looks.
 - ▶ Review with the children the shape and color of spinach.
- Give a stone to each child. Ask the children to paint the top and sides of their stone with a light colored paint.
- While the stones dry, help the children wash the brushes. Sing Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Spinach Version (Activity C2), while brushes are drying.
- Help the children draw a large spinach leaf on the stone.
- Have them paint their leaf green. If stone is large enough, also help them paint their initials on the stone.
- After the stones dry, spray them with clear shellac to waterproof and seal. Paint in a well-ventilated area.
- Allow stones to dry thoroughly.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

While eating, talk about making the spinach garden stones. Have the children think of uses for the garden stones they made.

- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Give to parents for home garden;
 - ▶ Use in a potted plant for decoration;
 - ▶ Use for a paper weight on a desk; or
 - ▶ Other ideas the children suggest.

Garden Gloves

The children decorate gardening gloves with images of fruits or vegetables.

Activity Length: 15 minutes

The Activity

This example uses strawberries as the featured fruit.

- Have each child seated at a table(s) or on the ground
- Ask the children, “What is a garden?” If they do not know, explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits are grown. Explain that sometimes people grow fruits and vegetables in gardens in their yards. Fruits and vegetables also grow on farms in large areas of land called fields.
- Explain that people sometimes wear gloves when gardening to keep their hands clean and safe from cuts.
- Explain that today they will decorate gardening gloves with pictures of strawberries.
- Show a picture of strawberries and a strawberry plant to the children.
 - ▶ Talk with the children about how a strawberry looks.
 - ▶ Review with the children the shape (heart-shaped) and color (red) of strawberries.
- Give each child a set of solid-colored gardening gloves. Ask the children to draw and color a strawberry plant or as many strawberries as they wish on their gloves.

Option: Use sponge shapes to stamp paint on gloves. Talk with the children about how strawberries grow while decorating the gloves. Let gloves dry.

- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

At snack or mealtime while eating the fruit or vegetable, talk with the children about the gloves they have made. Have the children suggest ways to use the gloves.

- Some ideas include:
 - ▶ Decorations for events like a garden theme party;
 - ▶ Decorations for a garden related bulletin board;
 - ▶ Gift to someone who likes to garden.

Materials Needed

- Drawings of fruit or vegetables (see Tool Shed Resources, pages 61-72)
- A pair of solid-colored gardening gloves for each child
- Fabric paints and brushes or fabric paint pens
- Smocks or large bibs

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Organize the materials.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Tool Shed Resources, Ten Terrific Ways..., pages 48-49).

Option: Cut fruit or vegetable shapes out of sponges. Use the sponges to apply fabric paint to gloves.

Materials Needed

- Two pieces of light-weight wood, approximately 5 feet and 3 feet in length
- Hammer and nails, or heavy duty staple gun and staples
- Old clothing such as plain t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, pants, socks, shoes, hats, gloves
- Straw, old rags, or plastic grocery bags
- Rope, at least 30 inches long
- Large, sturdy rubber bands

Option: Ask each child to bring an item of clothing such as a t-shirt or long-sleeve shirt, pants, socks, shoes, hats, gloves. Consider making two scarecrows so each child can contribute an item.

What To Do Ahead of Time

- Nail or staple the two narrow boards together in the shape of a cross. Choose the longer piece for the body and the shorter piece for the arms.
- Plan to serve the fruit or vegetable in some form at snack or mealtime (see Tool Shed Resources, Ten Terrific Ways..., pages 48-49).

Make a Scarecrow

The children make a scarecrow and talk about how fruits and vegetables grow.

Activity Length: 30 minutes—this activity can be split into two or more sessions.

The Activity

Take the children and supplies outside or into a large space.

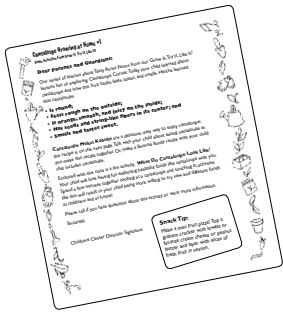
- Ask the children “What is a garden?” If they do not know, explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits grow. For example, sweet potatoes grow in gardens.
- Tell the children they are going to make a very special garden friend, a scarecrow.
- Explain that birds, rabbits, and squirrels will eat the fruits and vegetables in a garden. A scarecrow in a garden ‘scares the crows’ or other animals away. The animals think the scarecrow is a real person in the garden. They are afraid to come and eat the fruits and vegetables. Then the fruits and vegetables can be harvested for people to eat. Scarecrows also make a friendly decoration for the fall holidays.
- Make the head from an old t-shirt stuffed with straw, old rags, or plastic bags. Rubber-band the head onto the top of the cross. Help each child place the clothing item they brought on the scarecrow in the appropriate place.
- Place the shirt on the stick and stuff with straw, old rags or plastic bags. Use rubber bands to gather sleeves closed so the stuffing does not fall out.
- Place a pair of pants on the stick, tuck the shirt into the pants, tie around the waist with a piece of rope, and stuff.
- Do the same with socks and shoes, gloves, and hat.
- Post the scarecrow in a garden or use as a decoration.

Activity Connection to Snack or Mealtime

At snack or mealtime, talk about how the scarecrow helps fruits and vegetables grow by keeping the birds and animals away so people can harvest the fruits and vegetables.

Tool Shed Resources

Every farmer knows producing an abundant crop is easier when the right tools are at hand. Dig in and plow through the resources before you organize your teaching activities. Sprinkle a few of these tips, tricks, and techniques into the activities and watch the fun grow.



■ Growing at Home Introduction Letter to Parents

Sow the seeds of success! Send this letter home to families before starting the first unit.

■ Hand Washing/Polite Tasting Guides

Send a copy home with the introduction letter to have families tend the early growth of hand washing and polite tasting, two great habits.



■ Make a Mystery Box/Bag

Construct a simple mystery box or bag with these easy-to-follow instructions. The mystery box or bag may become a perennial favorite with the children, a resource you will want to use time and time again. If so, consider making a durable, washable version.

■ Tips for Using a Mystery Box/Bag

This resource is ripe with tips to make the most of the Mystery Box/Bag activity.

■ Ten Terrific Ways To Serve...

Children are more likely to try, taste, and eat new foods when given many different chances. Find 10 ways to serve each featured fruit and vegetable at meals and as snacks.





■ A Harvest of Books

Reap the rewards of reading to children. Stories can encourage food-tasting habits, prepare for planting activities, and entertain!

■ Green Thumb Guides

The Green Thumb Guides give easy-to-follow tips for growing a garden practically anywhere. Seasoned gardeners will find helpful hints, too.

- How to Grow a Seedling in a Bag
- Grow Seedlings Indoors
- Make a Seed Tape
- Container Gardens
- Gardening Outdoors



■ Fruit and Vegetable Drawings

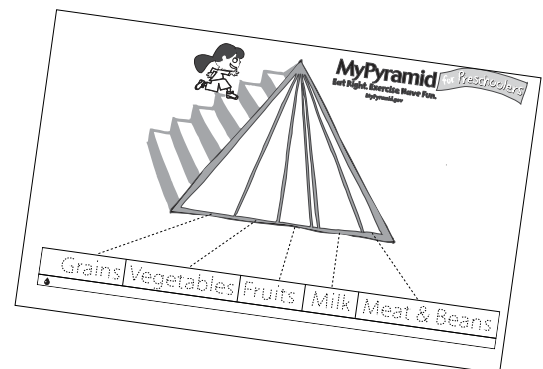
Drawings of the fruits and vegetables from each lesson shown grow, and ready for purchase in either grocery stores or farmers markets.

■ Blackline Masters

Blackline masters of the fruits and vegetables from each lesson to be used in various activities and Growing at Home materials.

■ MyPyramid for Preschoolers Coloring Page

Give children a chance to color their very own *MyPyramid for Preschoolers*.



Growing at Home

Home Activities From *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian:

Your child's class is beginning a grand food tasting and garden adventure and will be exploring new fruits and vegetables over the next several weeks or months. The seeds of positive food experiences will be planted as we encourage the children to taste and enjoy new fruits and vegetables.

The wonderful garden spots at the imaginary Tasty Acres Farm featured in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* are places your child's class will visit. The garden path will wind past these growing places:

- **Cantaloupe Corner**
- **Crookneck Squash Row**
- **Peach Tree Orchard**
- **Spinach Lane**
- **The Strawberry Patch**
- **Sweet Potato Hill**

The class will experience hands-on activities that include many opportunities to touch the featured fruit or vegetable. Your child will learn how each plant grows and produces delicious fruits and vegetables. A variety of art, craft, song, video, and new food tasting experiences will be sprinkled throughout your child's day. We will even try our hand at planting seeds. This gardening activity is a great way for children to learn about plants and how fruits and vegetables are grown.

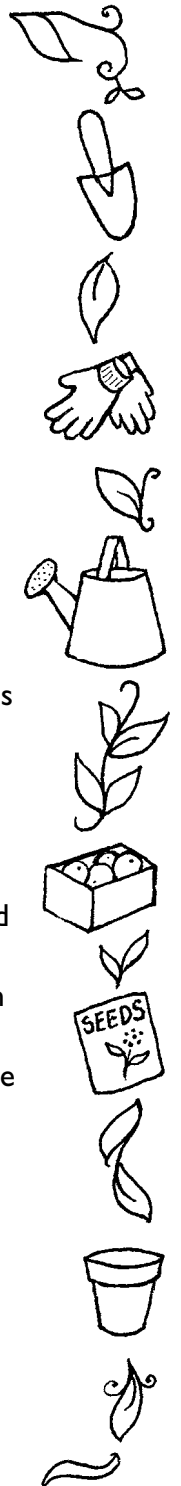
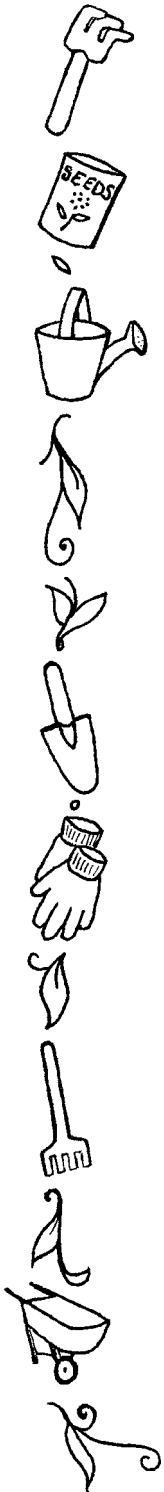
Attached is a resource on hand washing and polite food tasting that we use at the child care center. As we work to cultivate great food tasters, we want to grow good health habits for life. Your child will learn to thoroughly wash his/her hands and properly wash fruits and vegetables prior to preparing or eating food. Your child will learn polite food tasting; polite food tasting skills encourage children to try new foods more often. Please reinforce these practices at home. It is exciting to watch the children blossom into polite food tasters enjoying many different foods.

During your child's learning experiences, we will share information and activities with you and your family. Look for *Growing at Home* activity packets for updates on our adventures, recipes to try at home, and more!

Please call if you have questions or want more information.

Sincerely,

Child Care Center Director



Hand Washing and Polite Food Tasting Instructions

Hand Washing—Be Clean

Young children need to learn to be clean when handling food.

We wash our hands upon arrival at the child care center, immediately before and after eating a meal or snack, after using the restroom, after playing on the playground, after handling pets, pet cages, or other pet objects, after blowing our nose, whenever hands are visibly dirty, and before going home.

Remind children not to put clean hands in their mouths, noses, or other places. Clean hands help keep us from getting germs or soil in our mouths that might make us sick.

Practice good hand washing by following these directions. Many adults are surprised to learn good hand washing involves at least 20 seconds of sudsy lather time and includes under the nails, the back of the hands, and even up the arms.

Hand Washing Directions

- Wet...hands using warm running water.
- Lather...with soap up to the elbows.
- Rub...hands together for 20 seconds or about the length of time it takes to sing a verse of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm."
- Scrub...backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails.
- Rinse...under warm running water.
- Dry...with paper towels.
- Turn off...running water with a paper towel, not bare hands.



Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind

Children are more likely to try a taste of a new food if they don't have to swallow something they dislike. When children taste foods they do not want to swallow:

- Teach them to remove the food politely from their mouth with a napkin;
- Show them how to discard the napkin quietly in a wastebasket.

Remind your child or children that it is important to be kind to other people when tasting food. Do not make faces and say unpleasant things about the food. Acting that way can hurt the feelings of the person who prepared the food or of someone else who likes the food.

Polite food tasters try new foods. Polite food tasters say, "Yes, thank you" or "No, thank you" when offered seconds. They are happy when other people enjoy the food. And they are willing to try the food again in the future. Sometimes a food that does not taste good today will taste good on another day.



Make a Mystery Box or Bag

Make a simple mystery box by placing a large cardboard box 18 inches by 12 inches or larger on its side. Cut a hole in the side of the box, 4 inches in diameter, large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck, but as small as possible. To use the box, place it with the small hole up and turn the open side of the box to a wall. Drape a cloth over the large box opening to prevent children from looking into the box. If desired, decorate the box.

To make a simple mystery bag, use a large strong paper bag or non-see-through plastic bag. After putting the mystery item in the bag, use a rubber band to gather the opening of the bag just large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck. A simple drawstring bag may also work.

The Mystery Box or Bag may become so popular with children that a more durable, reusable style is desired. Follow the directions below to make a box or bag that can be cleaned and used repeatedly.

Durable Mystery Box

Materials needed:

- Box with a fitted lid or large, non-see-through plastic container (e.g., large ice cream tub) with lid
- Tube sock
- Duct tape, glue gun, or other means of attaching sock to opening
- Scissors



Cut a hole in the lid large enough to easily slip your fist through. This opening should be large enough for your hand and a child's hand to slip together into the opening should a child want you to feel inside the box with him/her.

Cut a length of tube sock 8 inches or longer. Pull the cut end of the sock through the opening and securely tape or glue the cut edge of the sock around the opening of the hole. You should be able to slip your hand through the open end of the tube sock, through the lid, and into the box.

Note—make sure the box or container is large enough to hold a crookneck squash or cantaloupe or the largest item you will place in it.

Durable Mystery Bag

Materials needed:

- A laundry bag with drawstring or a pillow case
- One 18-inch shoe string
- Fabric markers or appliqués for decoration

If using a pillow case, make two small cuts, ½ inch in length, on both sides of the seam near the stitching of the hemmed opening. Insert the shoe string into the pillow case and thread through the hemmed edge until it reaches the other slit. Gather the string. Decorate pillow case or bag, if desired.

Tips for Using the Mystery Box or Bag

Before you use the Mystery Box/Bag, introduce it to the children. If it has been a long time since the Mystery Box/Bag was used, reintroduce it to the children. Offer to feel inside the Mystery Box/Bag with children who are hesitant and want your assistance. Remind children to keep their ideas and guesses secret until everyone has had a turn at the Mystery Box/Bag.

Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor and ask them to remain seated. Take the Mystery Box/Bag to a place in the room where the children can see it and you, and the child feeling inside the Mystery Box/Bag can speak softly to you without the others hearing the comments easily.

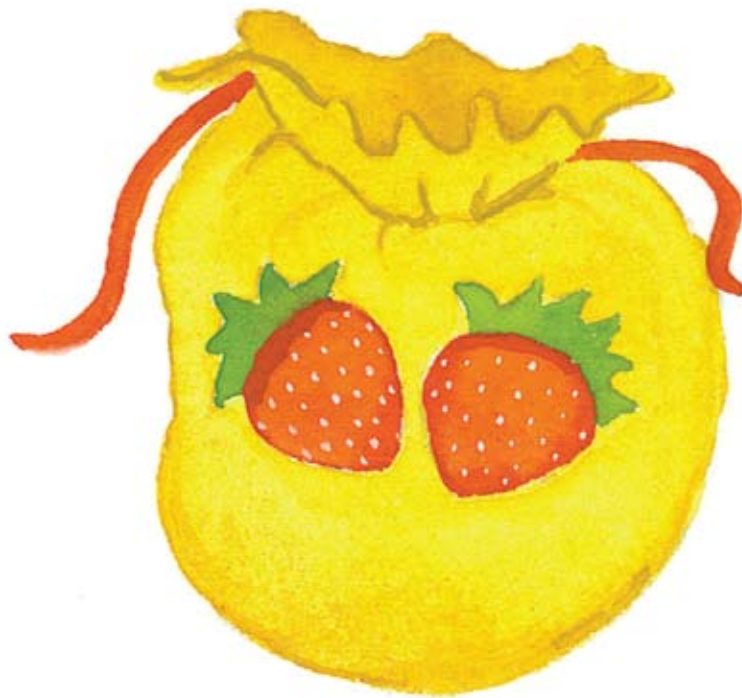
Tell the children each one will have a chance to describe to you what they feel in the Mystery Box/Bag. Give examples of description words such as sharp, soft, bumpy, heavy, light, etc., to help them understand the kind of observations to share with you.



One at a time, ask each child to come to the Mystery Box/Bag. Have each child feel inside the Mystery Box/Bag without looking inside it. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the Mystery Box/Bag with the child.

While at the Mystery Box/Bag, ask each child to describe quietly what he/she feels. Encourage words similar to the description words (suggested above and in the Words To Grow in each lesson) if the child has a hard time giving a description on his or her own. Have each child guess what is inside and whisper his/her guess to you. Write their answers on a piece of paper if you wish.

After everyone takes a turn, take the Mystery Box/Bag to the center of the semicircle of children. Remove the fruit or vegetable. Show it to the children. Talk about the fruit or vegetable, using the questions in "The Activity" box of the AI activity of each fruit or vegetable lesson.



Ten Terrific Ways To Serve...

Cantaloupe

1. Fresh slices or wedges
2. Cantaloupe Wraps—wrap thin slices of deli sliced ham around cantaloupe wedges
3. Cantaloupe Ice—freeze chilled Cantaloupe Soup in shallow trays for 15-20 minutes
4. A different shape—make cantaloupe balls using a melon ball kitchen tool
5. Thin slices on a sandwich—tuna, sliced turkey, or even peanut butter!
6. Bite-size chunks added to green salad for color and a sweet surprise
7. Mixed with other melons or fruits for fruit salad
8. Cantaloupe Kabobs—see Cantaloupe Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 5, page 31
9. Cantaloupe Soup—see Cantaloupe Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 5, page 34
10. Cantaloupe Fruit Salad—see Cantaloupe Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 5, page 37



Crookneck Squash

1. Fresh slices or sticks
2. Cooked and mashed
3. Diced and tossed into green salad
4. Cubed and added to vegetable soup
5. Sliced, battered, and lightly oven-or pan-fried
6. In a stir fry with other vegetables
7. Grilled on a kabob with tomatoes and mushrooms
8. Crookneck Squash Bread Recipe—see Crookneck Squash Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 2, page 31
9. Crookneck Squash Vegetable Soup Recipe—see Crookneck Squash Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 2, page 34
10. Crookneck Squash Pasta Salad Recipe—see Crookneck Squash Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 2, page 37



Peaches

1. Fresh slices with vanilla yogurt for dipping
2. Frozen slices, semi-thawed—a cool nibble on a hot day
3. Chunks of drained canned peaches added to hot or cold cereals and lowfat or fat-free milk
4. Diced peaches tossed in a vegetable salad for a sweet treat
5. Chilled soup—puree 3 cups canned peaches and 1 cup orange juice, served chilled
6. Dried peaches or peach nectar
7. Pieces of peaches mixed with other fruits in a salad
8. Peaches Ala Mode Recipe—see Peach Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 6, page 29
9. Peach Cobbler Recipe—see Peach Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 6, page 32
10. Peach Muffins with Oatmeal Topping Recipe—see Peach Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 6, page 35



Spinach

1. Fresh leaves with ranch dressing for dip
2. Spinach leaves mixed with other types of lettuce leaves for a greener green salad
3. Fresh spinach leaves in a sandwich, in place of lettuce
4. Chopped and added to vegetable soup
5. Spinach Leaf Rolls—spread a leaf with a dab of lowfat cream cheese or peanut butter and roll
6. Added to lasagna—thaw and squeeze dry a box of chopped frozen spinach and add with cheese layers
7. Mini pizzas made with English muffin halves, sauce, fresh spinach leaves, and cheese
8. Dilly Spinach Dip Recipe—see Spinach Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 3, page 31
9. Easy Cheesy Spinach Pie Recipe—see Spinach Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 3, page 34
10. Spinach-Cantaloupe-Strawberry Salad Recipe—see Spinach Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 3, page 37



Strawberries

1. Fresh strawberries
2. Fresh strawberries sliced with cottage cheese
3. Chilled soup—puree 3 cups strawberries, 1 cup orange juice, and 2 tablespoons sugar
4. Freeze-dried Strawberries—see cold cereal section of store for cereal with berries added
5. Sliced and tossed in salads for a sweet treat
6. Slices layered with vanilla or lemon yogurt
7. Mixed with other berries and served over angel food cake cubes
8. Chocolate Strawberries Recipe—see Strawberry Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 7, page 31
9. Strawberry Sauce Recipe on waffles, pancakes, pudding, yogurt—see Strawberry Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 7, page 34
10. Strawberry Smoothie Recipe—see Strawberry Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 7, page 37



Sweet Potatoes

1. Raw slices with ranch dip
2. Cubed and added to vegetable soups
3. Cooked, pureed, and used in quick bread recipes, for example, substituted for bananas in banana bread
4. Roasted slices with apples
5. Cooked, cooled, and cubed in potato salad
6. Shredded raw and added to green salads like carrot shreds
7. Cooked, pureed, and added to a milk-based, creamy soup
8. Mashed Sweet Potatoes Recipe—see Sweet Potato Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 4, page 31
9. Oven Baked Sweet Potato Planks—see Sweet Potato Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 4, page 34
10. Sweet Potato-Oatmeal-Chocolate Chip Bar Cookies Recipe—see Sweet Potato Growing at Home Recipe, Booklet 4, page 38

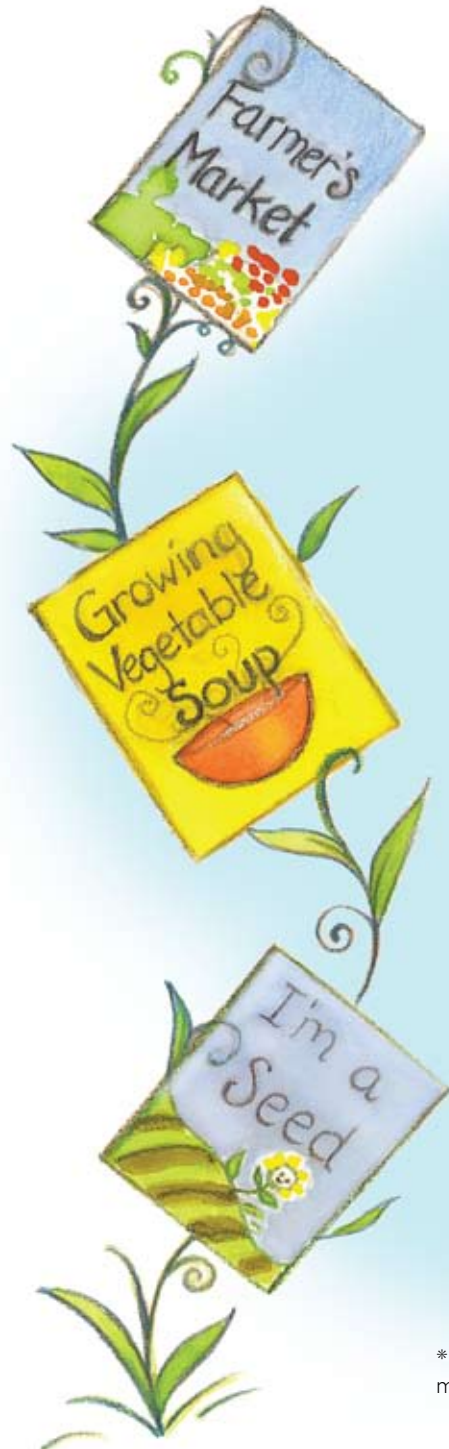




A Harvest of Books

Children love stories about food, how food grows, and wonderful ways to eat food. Below is a partial list of the many children's books available featuring food.

New books are published daily. Check the children's book department in public libraries and bookstores frequently for new books featuring fruits and vegetables.



Titles*

A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden
Bitter Bananas (Picture Puffins)
Corn (What's for Lunch)
Eating the Alphabet Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z
Farmer's Market
Growing Vegetable Soup
I'm a Seed (Hello Reader! Science, level 1)
Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!
Oliver's Vegetables (Ventur-Health & the Human Body)
Potatoes (*What's for Lunch*)
Pumpkin Circle
Pumpkin Day, Pumpkin Night
Pumpkin Fiesta
Round the Garden
Squash Pie
The Cantaloupe Cat
The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story (Picture Puffins)
The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher
The Perilous Pit
The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree
The Surprise Garden
The Ugly Vegetables

* Mention of these materials is not an endorsement by the Department of Agriculture over other materials that may be available on this subject.

Ready to grow tip: Read a book about how seeds grow or how plants produce food as an introduction to the Section B activities for each fruit and vegetable in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

Suggested Books

Books in bold feature fruits and vegetables from the fertile grounds of Tasty Acres Farm as featured in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

Author

- Melaine Eclare
- Isaac Olaleye
- Pam Robson
- Lois Ehlert
- Paul Brett Johnson
- Lois Ehlert
- Jean Marzollo
- Candace Fleming
- Vivian French
- Claire Llewellyn
- George Levenson
- Anne F. Rockwell
- Caryn Yacowitz
- Omri Glaser
- Wilson Gage
- Jan Yager
- Joseph Bruchac
- Molly Bang
- Orel Protopopescu
- Gail Gibbons
- Zoe Hall
- Grace Lin

Topic

- Vegetables
- Bananas
- Corn
- Fruits/Vegetables
- Fruits/Vegetables
- Vegetables
- How Seeds Grow
- Vegetables
- Vegetables
- Potatoes
- Pumpkins
- Pumpkins
- Pumpkins
- Vegetables
- Squash
- Cantaloupe
- Strawberries
- Strawberries
- Peaches
- Apples
- Vegetables
- Vegetables



Green Thumb Guides

■ How To Grow a Seedling in a Bag

A Seedling in a Bag is a great visual to help children see what is happening to the seed they have planted in the soil.

Materials needed:

- Plastic bag with a zipper-style closure
- Absorbent paper towel, 1-2 sheets
- Stapler
- Dry lima bean seeds, soaked in water overnight
- Masking or strapping tape
- Sunny southern or western exposure window

Wet the paper towel well and place in plastic bag. Place a row of staples across the center of the paper towel. Place soaked beans on top of row of staples and seal bag.

Tape the bag with the seed side facing the room to a sunny southern or western exposure window.

The staples hold the seeds in place, allowing the roots to grow down and sprouts to grow up.

Note: Soaking the lima beans overnight in water helps hydrate the beans and speeds the sprouting process. Lima beans will sprout fast, give quick results, and help keep the children's interest. Spinach, squash, and cantaloupe seeds will also produce seedlings; sprouting times will vary.



■ Grow Seedlings Indoors

Plants need soil, water, sun, and time to grow. Plants can be grown almost anywhere, using containers, soil next to sidewalks, or a traditional garden spot. Below are general tips for starting plants indoors from seeds. Check with your local USDA Cooperative Extension Service office for more information. To find the office nearest you, check this Web site: www.csrees.usda.gov/extension/index/html.



Local gardening experts, nurseries, and gardening books are other sources to determine planting times specific to the area where you live.

If you have never gardened before, think of it as an adventure you and the children will take together. If your plants thrive, you can celebrate your harvest. If they do not, be thankful for all the farmers' who produce foods to eat. It is sometimes harder than it looks!

Starting Plants From Seeds

While seeds planted will sprout any time of year, timing is important if the seedlings are for transplanting outdoors. Check the back of the seed packet for directions on how deep the seeds should be buried in the soil and the time required from indoor planting to transplanting outdoors for your planting zone. Allow time for plants to 'harden' before planting outdoors. (See *Hardening Seedlings for Transplanting Outdoors*, below.)

Growing Seedlings Indoors

Set the containers on a sunny window sill facing the south or southwest. Seedlings grow toward the sun. Rotate the containers every few days so the plants grow straight, not lop-sided.

If there is no sunny window, use fluorescent lights or special grow lights kept within a few inches of the top of the containers. The lights help the seeds grow into plants the same way the warmth and light of the sun helps plants grow outdoors. Seedlings grow best with 14 to 16 hours of light per day.

Check the containers every day to see the seeds' progress. Expect seedlings to appear in about 5 to 10 days.

Once the seeds have sprouted, check every 2 to 3 days to see if the seedlings need water. Test the soil moisture by touching it gently with a finger. Water only when the top ½ inch of soil is dry. It is best to water seedlings when the soil feels dry rather than on a regular schedule. Use the spray bottle to mist water gently similar to rainfall, using a few sprays, depending on how much water dispenses.



Hardening Seedlings for Transplanting Outdoors

Before the seedlings are planted outside (when climate conditions permit), the plants need to be 'hardened.' Hardening helps plants adjust to the harsher conditions outdoors. Plants are ready to harden once the seedlings have developed a few green leaves. Set the containers outside for increasingly longer periods each day. Start with a few hours and increase to a full day over the course of a week or so. Be careful not to leave the tender seedlings in hot, direct sunlight for too long. Plants hardened for about a week are ready to plant outside. After planting, watch local weather forecasts and cover the plants if frost is predicted overnight.

■ Make a Seed Tape

Materials Needed:

- Cornstarch
- Stovetop or hot plate
- Appropriate fruit or vegetable seed packet
- Sealable plastic sandwich bag or tooth picks
- Paper towels, inexpensive type that will breakdown in soil easily
- Ruler
- Pen
- Scissors

Prepare the gel ahead of time by dissolving 1 tablespoon of cornstarch in 1 cup of cold water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once the mixture starts to boil and turns into a gel, remove from heat and allow it to cool to room temperature.

Take three or four paper towels, fold them at the perforations, and cut them into 1-inch strips, cutting across the perforations to create long strips. Unfold and lay the paper towel strips on a flat surface.

Refer to the seed packet to note how far apart the seeds should be spaced. Use a ruler and pen to make marks on the towel strips at the appropriate spacing.

Place a few spoonfuls of the gel into a plastic sandwich bag and seal the top. Snip off a corner of the gel-filled bag and squeeze a small droplet of gel on each of the marked spots. Place a seed on top of each drop of gel. The seeds will be firmly attached when the gel dries.

Young children can help mark where to place the seeds on the paper strip and place large seeds such as cantaloupe or crookneck squash on gel dots.

Note: The gel drop is used to 'glue' the seed to the strip of paper. Seeds should not be completely coated by gel, but rather sit on top of the gel. For very small seeds, it may be easier to touch the tip of a toothpick in the gel, pick up a seed with the gel, and transfer the gel with seed to the paper strip.

Seed tapes can be made for gifts. Store dried seed tapes in sealed envelopes; label with seed name and directions for planting. Children can decorate the envelopes with drawings of the plants before putting the seed tapes inside the envelopes.



Variation: Make a Seed Circle

Cut a circle of paper towel the diameter of a Painted Pot (see Garden Art and Crafts Section, page 35). Glue spinach seeds or herb seeds to the paper towel circle.

Gift-giving idea: Portion a bag of potting soil and put it in the pot. Lay the seed circle on top of the bag of soil and wrap in Stamped Wrapping Paper or place in a Decorated Garden Bag (see Garden Art and Crafts Section, pages 32 and 27). Attach a Garden Scenes Note Card (see Garden Art and Crafts Section, page 30). Copy the back of the seed package for growing instructions, if desired.

■ Container Gardens

Plants need soil, water, sun, and time to grow. Plants can be grown almost anywhere using containers. Container gardens are common in cities where space is limited and in the country where weeds are plentiful.

Container gardens do have special needs. Follow these tips to produce the best results. Check out the resources listed for more information on container gardening.

Soil and Fertilizer

Use commercial potting soil; it is lightweight. Containers get heavy. Container gardens may need more fertilizer. The water draining from the pot washes nutrients out of the soil. Check with a local garden or nursery center for more information on using fertilizers with container gardens.

Water and Drainage

Container gardens need to drain water. Containers must have a few drain holes for water to flow out. Standing water in the bottom of a pot can rot the plant's roots. Use flat stones or 'pot feet' (check garden supply stores) to lift a pot off the ground for drainage. Or, nestle a pot with drainage inside a solid pot.

Weather conditions and container size will influence water needs. The soil inside the pot can get very hot and 'cook' plant roots. This can also happen if the pot is too small for the plant. Check with local garden experts for guidelines on watering plants in pots.



Seeds or Plants

Some fruit and vegetable plant varieties thrive in pots. Look for seed packets and plant starts, new plants started from seeds, specifically for containers at nurseries. Be sure to find out if more than one plant is needed for pollination.

Match the size of the full-grown plant to the size of the planting container. Every fruit and vegetable, in some variety, featured in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* can be grown in a container, even a dwarf peach tree! Spinach and strawberries will thrive in smaller containers or in a bag. Squash, cantaloupe, and sweet potatoes will need more space. Check with local experts or resources below for recommended container sizes.

Containers and Container Size

REMEMBER: All containers need drainage holes. Suitable containers include clay pots, empty plastic buckets, cans, and milk cartons. Give an old plastic wading pond new life as a miniature garden spot. Fill it with soil or fill it with pots of plants.

Garden in a Bag

Look for commercial growbags or make your own. Find a thick plastic bag of potting soil (it is important that the bag is sturdy and will not break apart easily). Poke drainage holes in the bottom. Plant spinach seeds or strawberry starts in holes in the top. Watering a growbag can be the hardest part. During summer heat, water every day. A plastic pipe with holes drilled in the sides can be inserted the length of the bag to help deliver water evenly.

Sunlight

Container gardens need several hours of sunlight each day. The soil in containers can become hot. Long hours of direct sunlight may be too much for plants in containers. Check with local garden experts for guidance on sunlight for container plants in your area.

More Resources for Container Gardening

Team Nutrition offers help with gardening. These references are available on the Team Nutrition Internet Web site: teamnutrition.usda.gov.

- *Grow a Family Garden!* from Nibbles for Health, Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children: teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/grow_garden.pdf
- *Starting a Team Nutrition Garden* from Team Nutrition Days...and Beyond teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/howtokit.html (pages 11-16)
- For more information, check with gardening books or contact local gardening experts at nurseries or your local USDA Cooperative Extension Service office. On the web, check: www.csrees.usda.gov/extension/index/html

For more information on successful container gardens, check out these resources recommended* in *The Gardener's Reading Guide: The Best Books for Gardeners* (Jan Dean, ©1993 Facts on File, Inc. New York, NY).

- Beckett, Kenneth; Carr, David; and Stevens, David *The Contained Garden: A complete illustrated guide to growing plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables outdoors in pots* (Viking, 1999) Find details on container size, plant selection and more in this comprehensive resource.
- Colburn, Nigel *The Container Garden* (Little, Brown, 2000) This resource gives tips for using containers and combining containers with traditional beds to produce fruits, vegetables, and more in containers.
- Cotner, Dr. Sam *Container Vegetables: The Easy Way To Garden* (Texas Gardener Press, 1987) This resource is helpful to use to produce vegetables when space is limited.
- Ortho, *Gardening in Containers* (Ortho, 1998) A detailed resource on a container and plant selection, soil, watering, and more.
- Rees, Yvonne, and Palliser, David *Container Gardening All Year Round* (Trafalgar Square, 1991) How to plant fruits, vegetables, flowers, and control pests and more in every type of container.
- Skelsey, Alice F. *Cucumbers in a Flowerpot* (Workman Publishing, 1984) revised edition of *Farming in a Flowerpot* (1975).
- Stewart, Diana *The Window Box: Pot, Tub and Basket Book* (Hearst books, 1987) How to use window boxes for vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Special section includes tips for children.
- *Sunset Container Gardening* (Sunset Books, 1998) A complete guide from a gardening authority.

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement by the Department of Agriculture over other materials that may be available on this subject.



■ Gardening Outdoors

Plants need soil, water, sun, and time to grow. Plants can grow in nearly any plot of soil with enough sun and water. Plots of soil next to sidewalks, flowerbeds, and even shrubs can do double duty as garden spots. If you do not have space, check for community garden spots or other nearby locations suitable for garden activities. Combine container and traditional gardens, if necessary.

Follow these tips to produce the best results. Check out the resources listed for more information on gardens.

Soil and Fertilizer

Prepare the soil for planting by tilling or breaking it up. A large garden spot can be prepared with a rotor-tiller. Add fertilizer of some sort - compost, manure, or chemical types. Young children need the soil prepared for them. If necessary, dig the soil from a spot and replace with potting soil. It's a quick way to have prepared and fertilized soil in for a small plot. Check with local garden experts for guidelines on improving soil for gardens.

Water and Drainage

Gardens need a ready supply of water. The soil needs to drain extra water deeper into the ground. The soil type will determine how well water drains.

Weather conditions and garden locations will influence water needs. The soil beside asphalt and concrete can be very hot. Check with local garden experts for guidelines on watering plants in pots.

Seeds or Plants for Different-Size Spaces and Zones

Some fruit and vegetable plant varieties thrive in small spaces. Look for seed packets, plant starts, and new plants started from seeds that produce compact plants at nurseries if space is limited. Be sure to find out if more than one plant is needed for pollination. To grow sweet potatoes, locate seed stock from stores or mail order nurseries. Sweet potatoes from the grocery store will sprout in a jar, but will not produce more sweet potatoes.

Match the type of plant to the planting zone where you live. Every fruit and vegetable (in some variety) featured in *Grow It! Try It! Like It!* can be grown throughout the United States with the exception of sweet potatoes. These plants require warm nights and may not grow in northern climates. Check with local experts for plant varieties that thrive in your area.

Sunlight

Gardens need several hours of sunlight each day. Long hours of direct sunlight may be too much for some plants such as spinach and strawberries. Check with local garden experts for guidance on sunlight for plants in your area.

Weeds

Learn to recognize weeds and remove them from garden spots. It is easier if plant starts are used. Use grass clippings or mulch to cover the spaces between rows for a walk-on weed barrier.

More Resources for Gardening Outdoors

Team Nutrition offers help with gardening. These references are available on the Team Nutrition Internet website: teamnutrition.usda.gov

- *Grow a Family Garden!* from Nibbles for Health, Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/grow_garden.pdf
- *Starting a Team Nutrition Garden* from Team Nutrition Days...and Beyond teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/howtokit.html (pages 11-16)
- For more information, check with gardening books or contact local gardening experts at nurseries or your local USDA Cooperative Extension Service office. On the web, check: csrees.usda.gov/extension/index/html

For more information on gardening with children, check out these resources recommended* in *The Gardener's Reading Guide: The Best Books for Gardeners* (Jan Dean, ©1993 Facts on File, Inc. New York, NY):

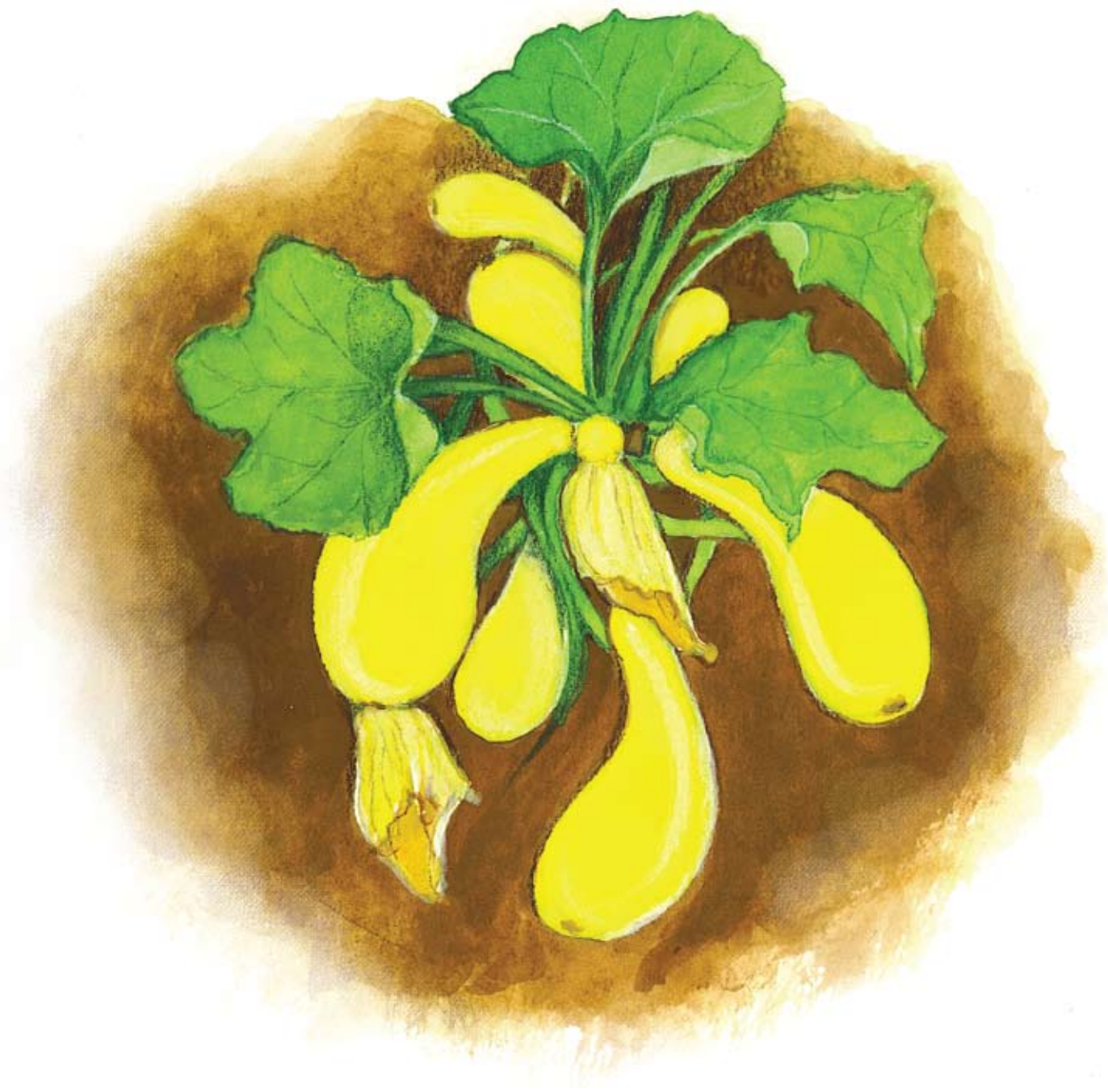
- Fell, Derek *A Kid's First Book of Gardening: Growing Plants Indoors and Out* (Running Press, 1989)
- Garland, Sarah *Peter Rabbit's Gardening Book* (Warne, 1983)
- Lopez, Ruth K. *Gardens for Growing People: A Guide to Garden with Children* (1990) Gardens for Growing People is a business devoted to gardening resources for children. Contact them at P.O. Box 630, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956.
- Markmann, Erika *Grow It! An Indoor/Outdoor Gardening Guide for Kids* (Random House, 1991;)
- Tilgner, Linda *Let's Grow: 72 Gardening Adventures with Children* (Garden Way, 1994)
- Waters, Marjorie *The Victory Garden Kids' Book: A Beginner's Guide to Growing Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers* (Houghton Mifflin, 1994)
- *Sunset Best Kids Garden Book* (Sunset Publishing Corporation, 1992) A great guide from a gardening authority.

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement by the Department of Agriculture over other materials that may be available on this subject.

Fruit and Vegetable Drawings

Crookneck Squash

Crookneck squash growing in garden



Crookneck Squash

Crookneck squash at farmers' market



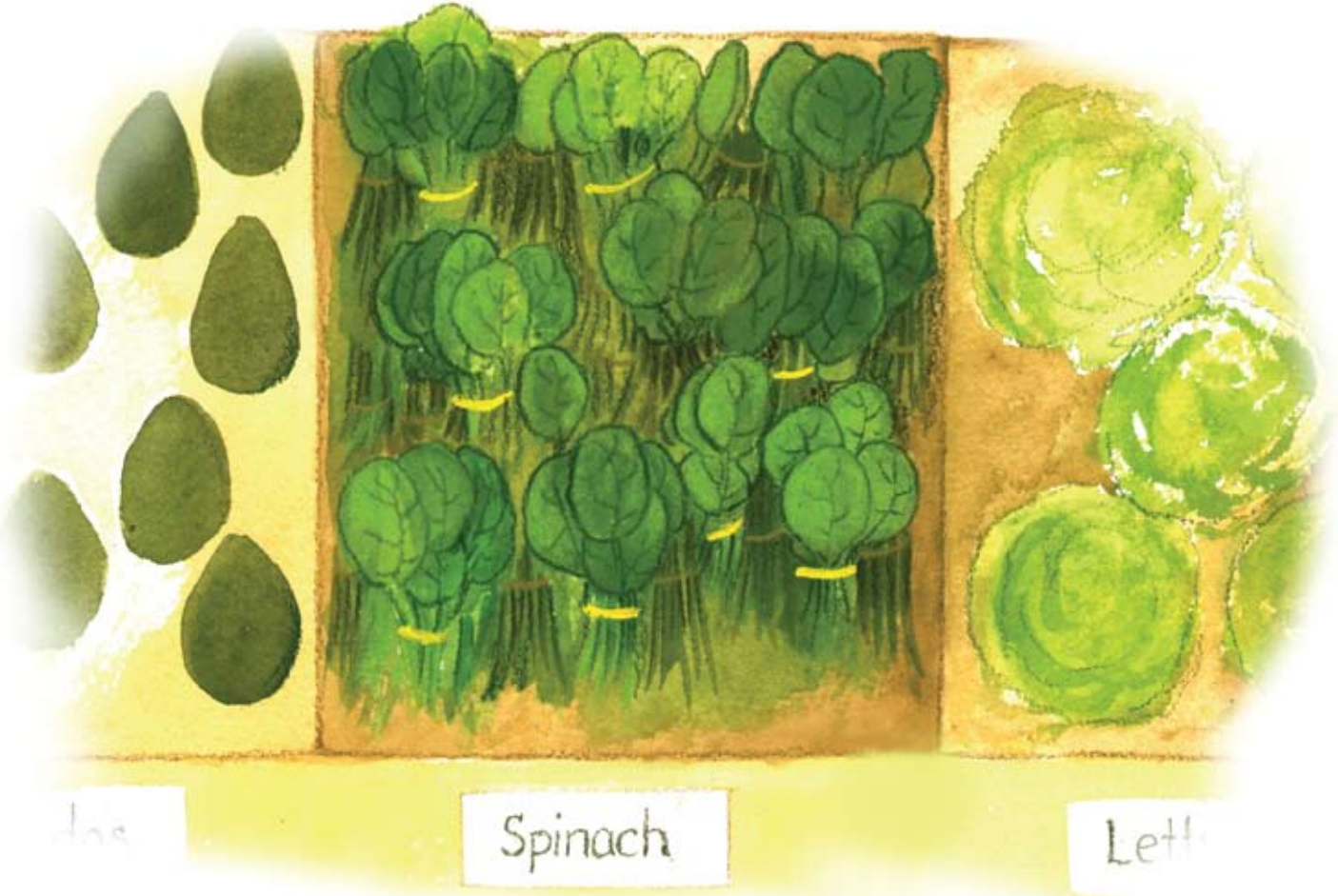
Spinach

Spinach growing in garden



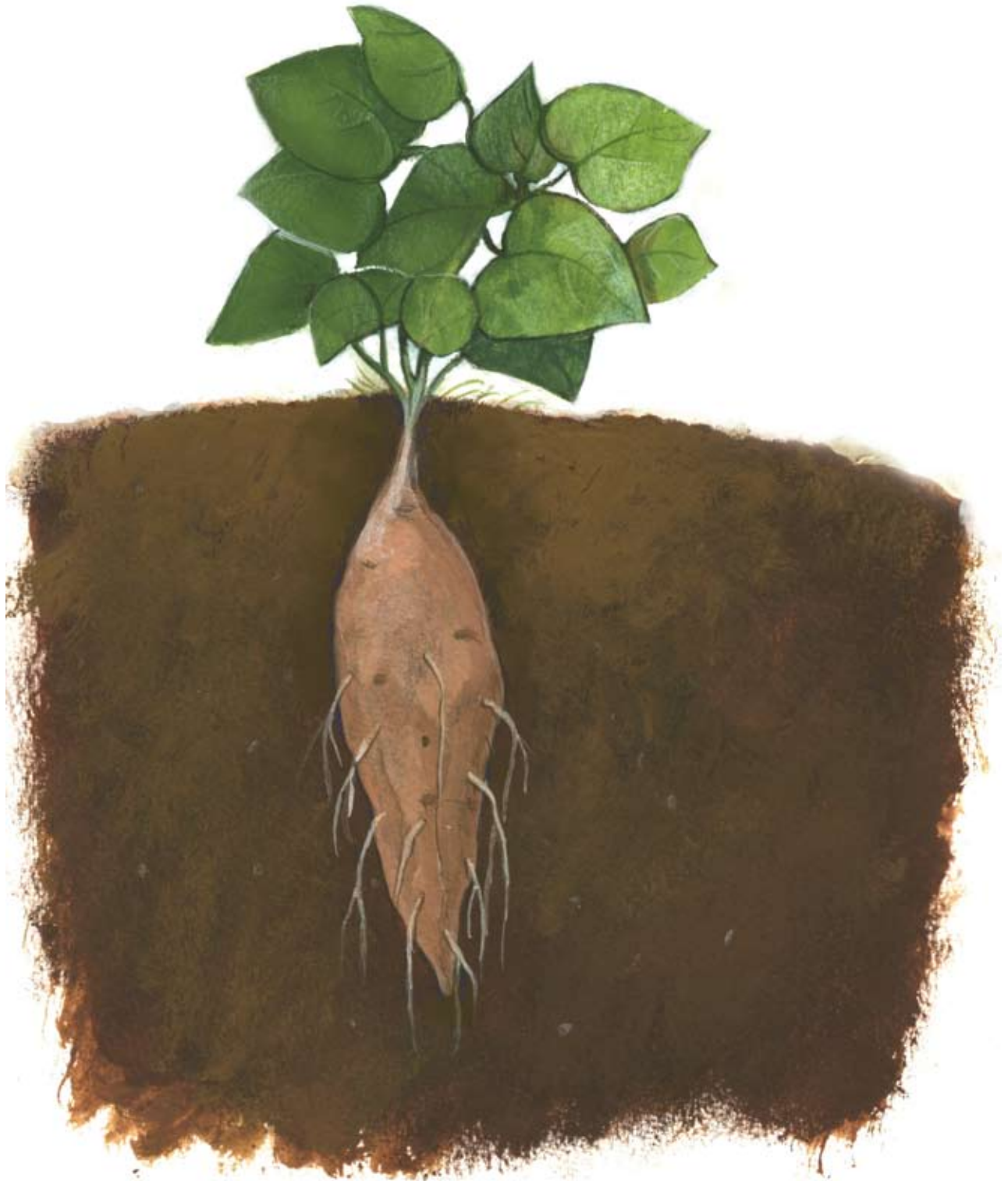
Spinach

Spinach in grocery store



Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes in ground



Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes at farmers' market



Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe growing in field



Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe in grocery store



Peach

Peaches growing on trees in orchard



Peach

Peaches in grocery store



Strawberry

Strawberries growing in garden



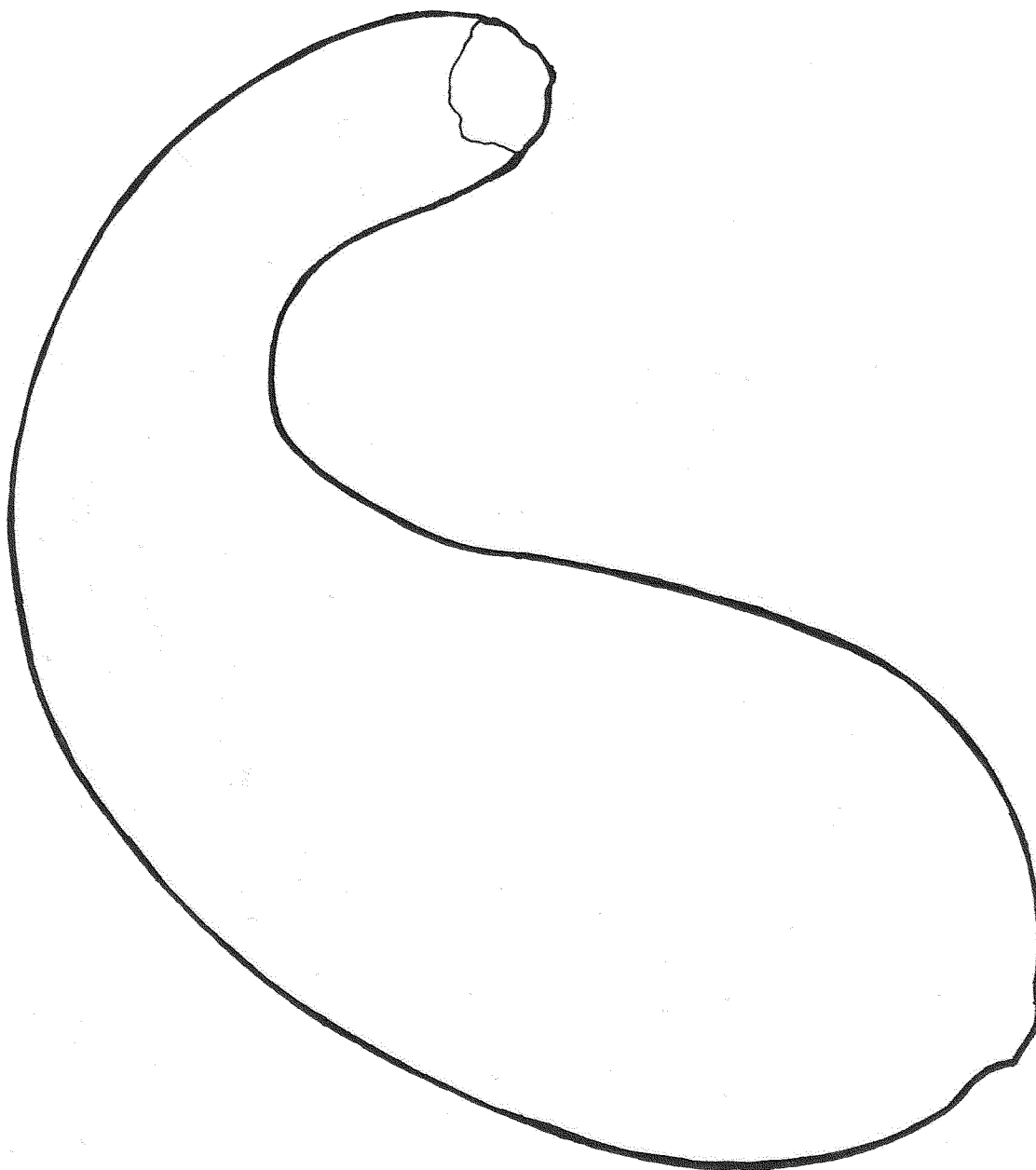
Strawberry

Strawberries at farmers' market



BLACKLINE MASTERS

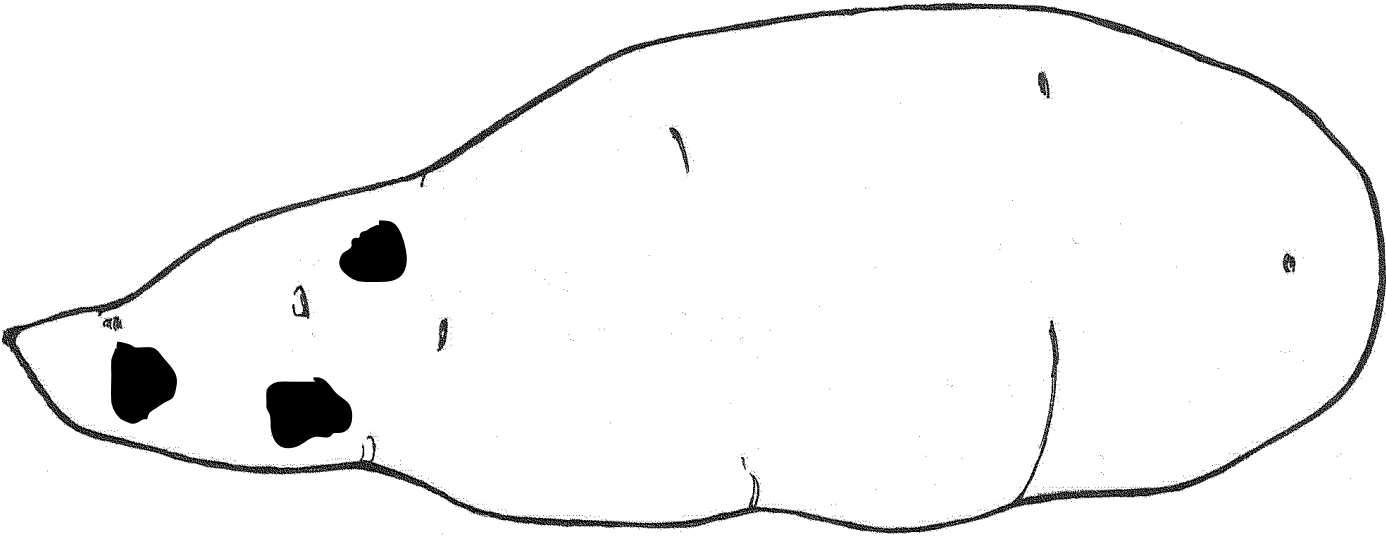
Crookneck Squash



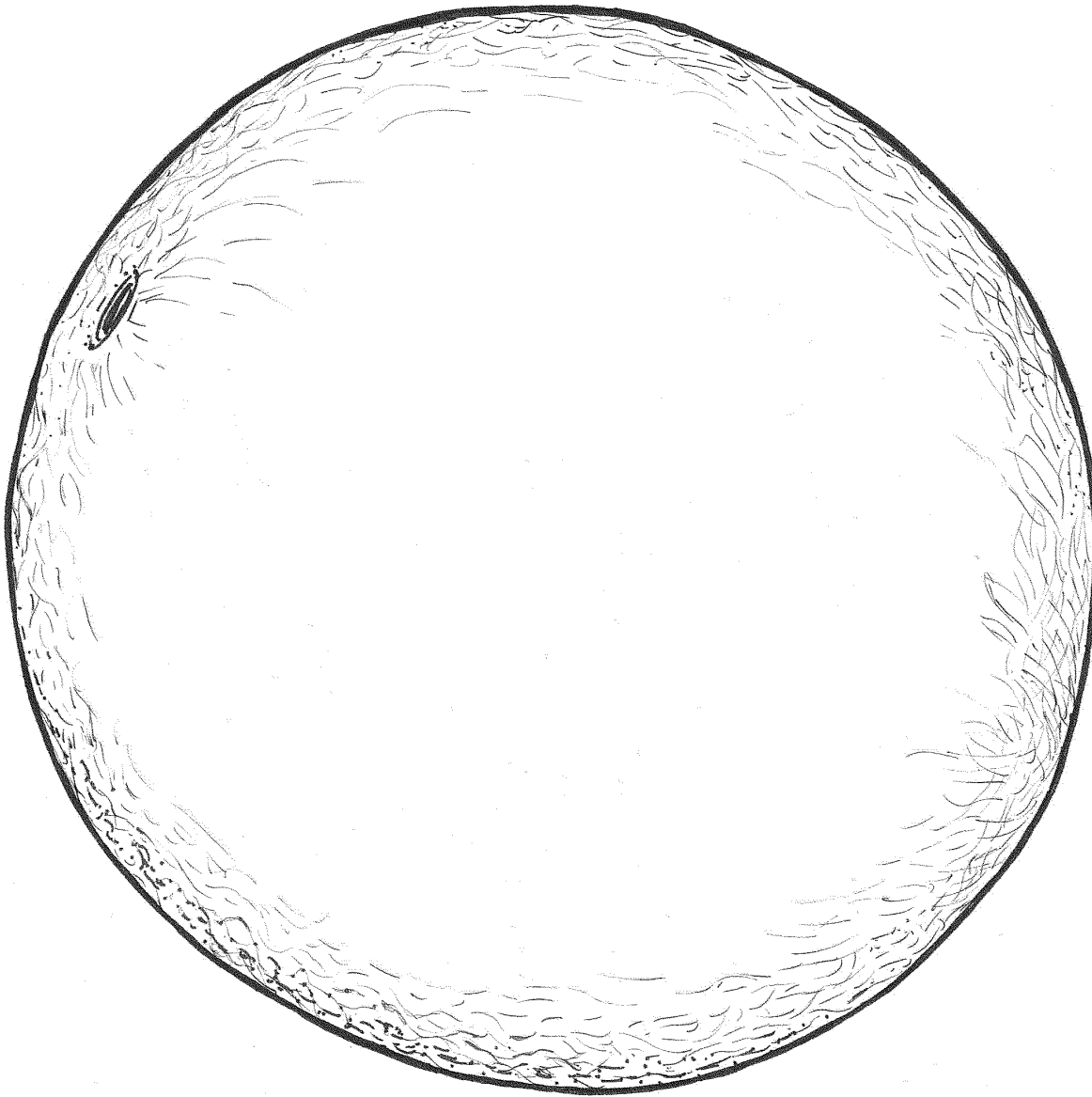
Spinach



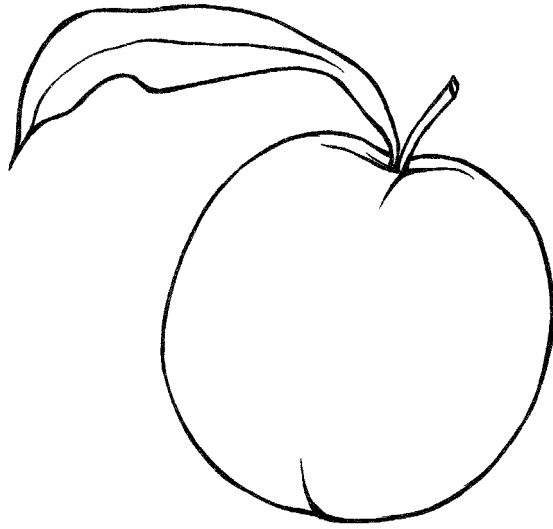
Sweet Potato



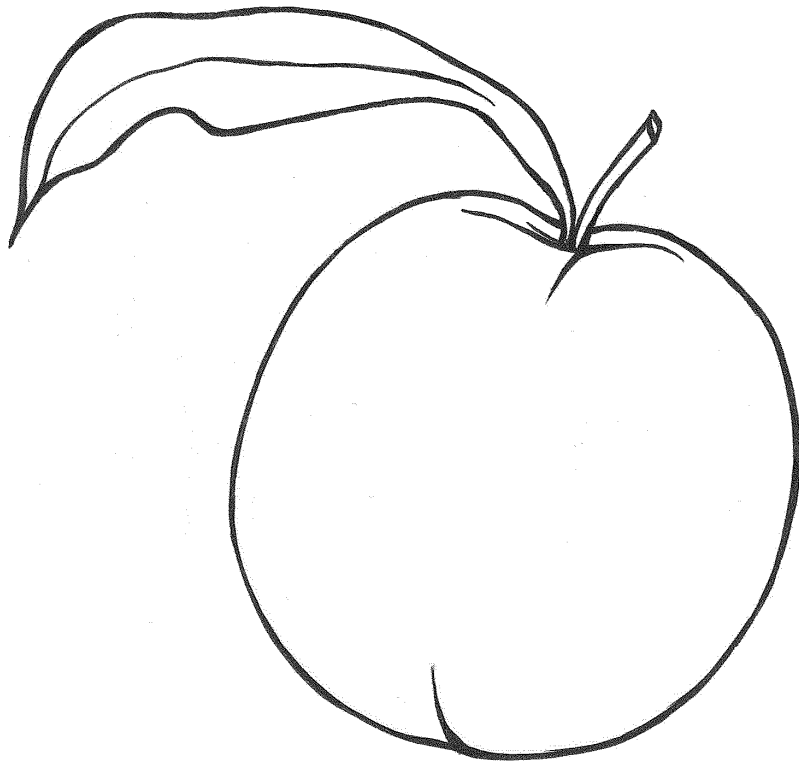
Cantaloupe



Peach

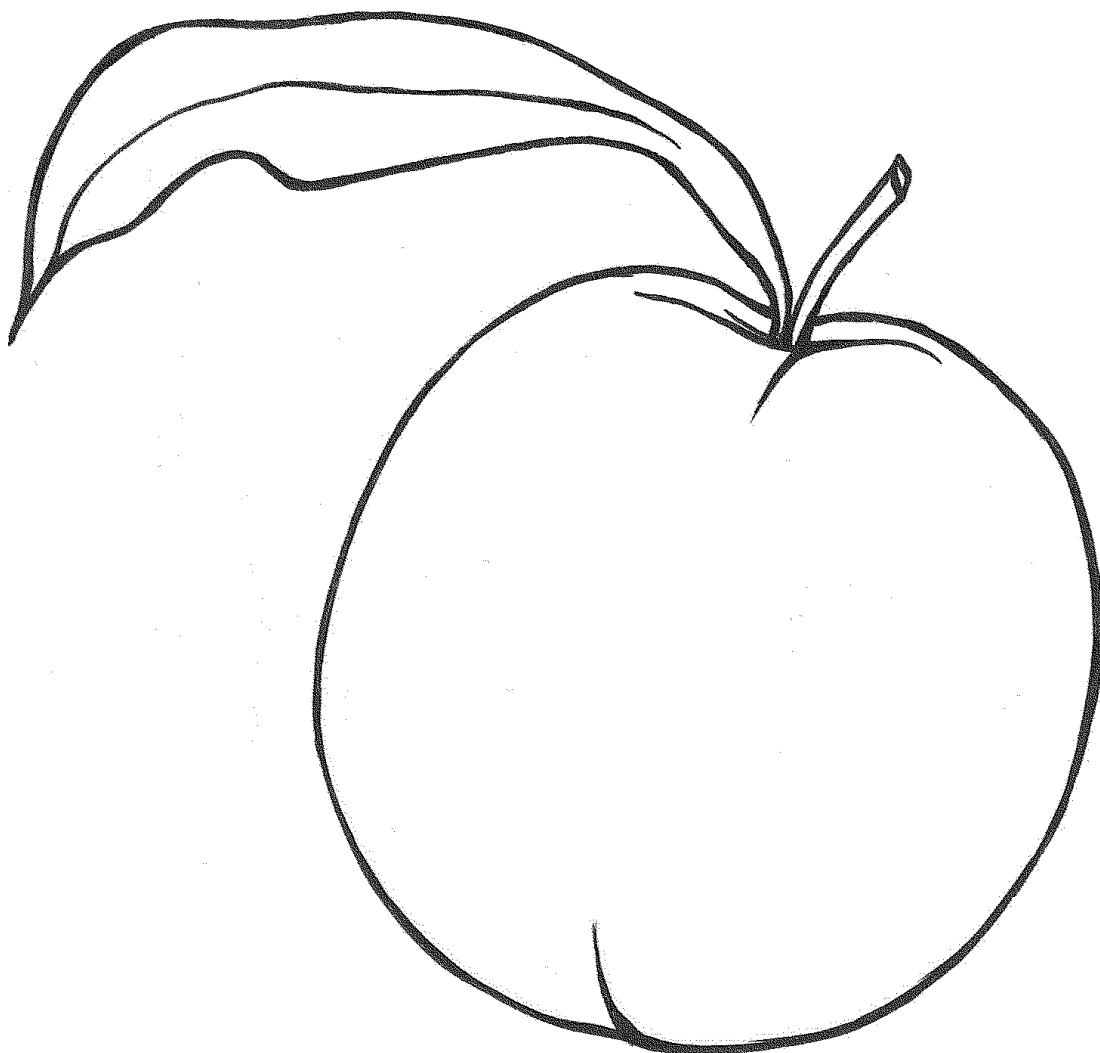


**2”
peach**



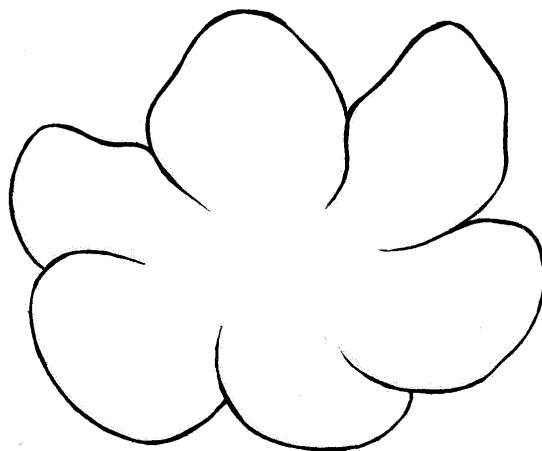
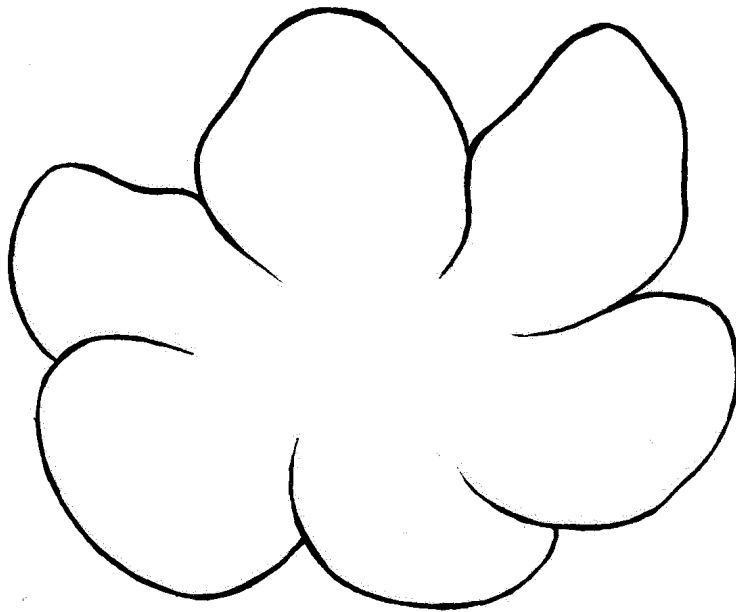
**3”
peach**

Peach

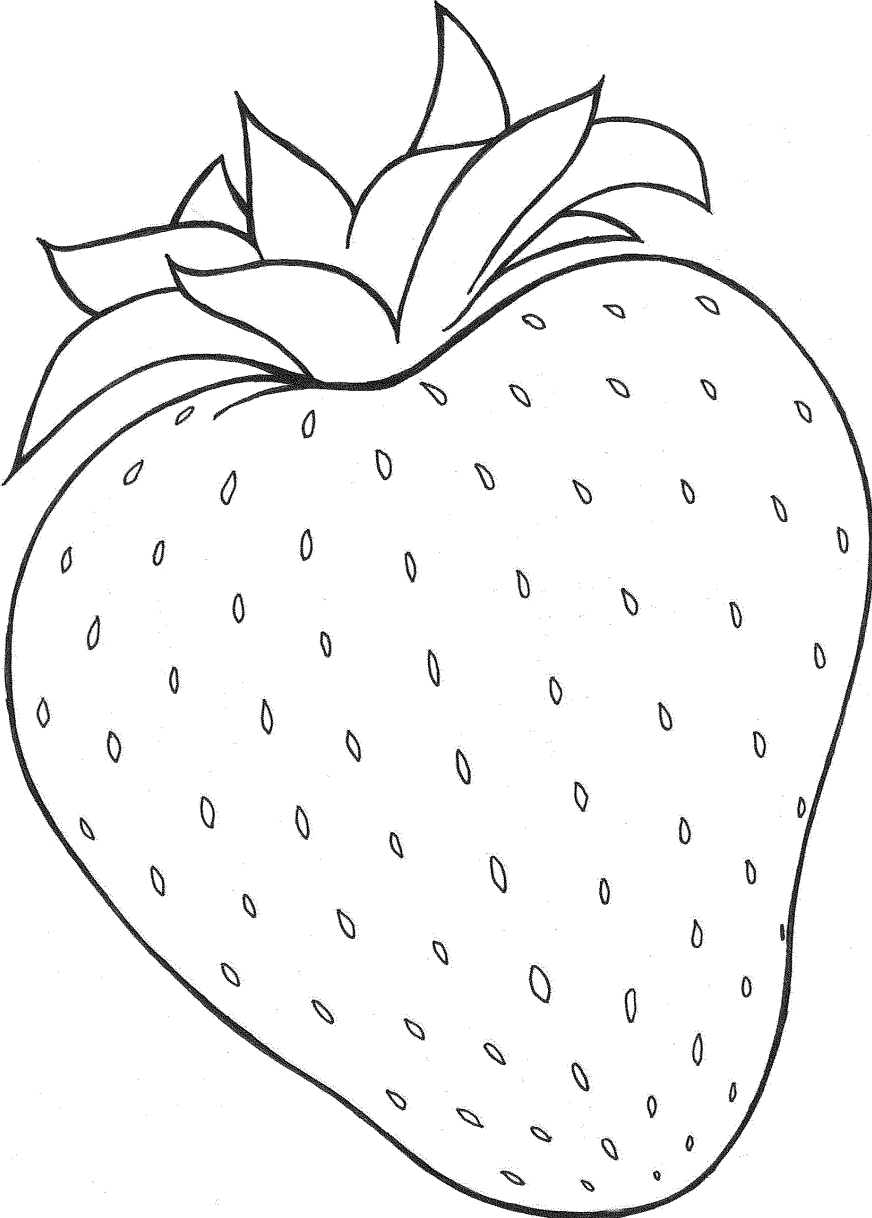


4''
peach

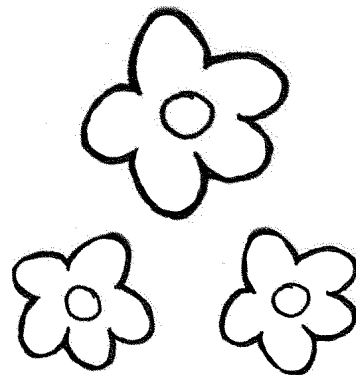
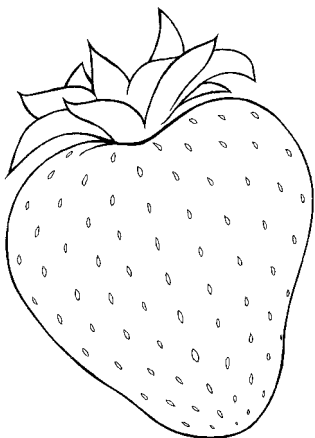
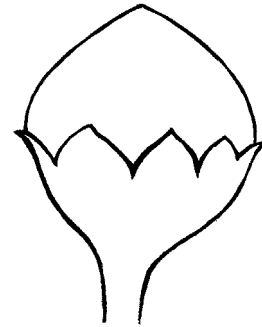
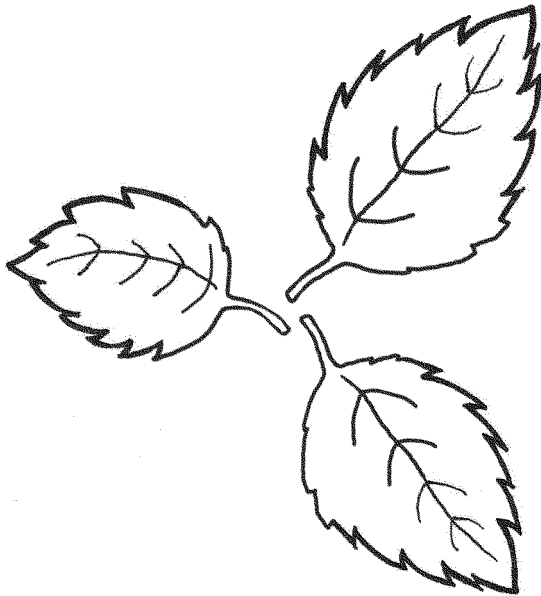
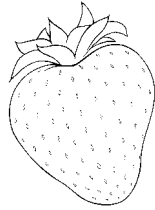
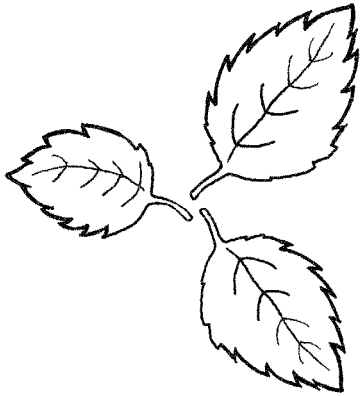
Peach Blossoms



Strawberry



Strawberry Plant Parts

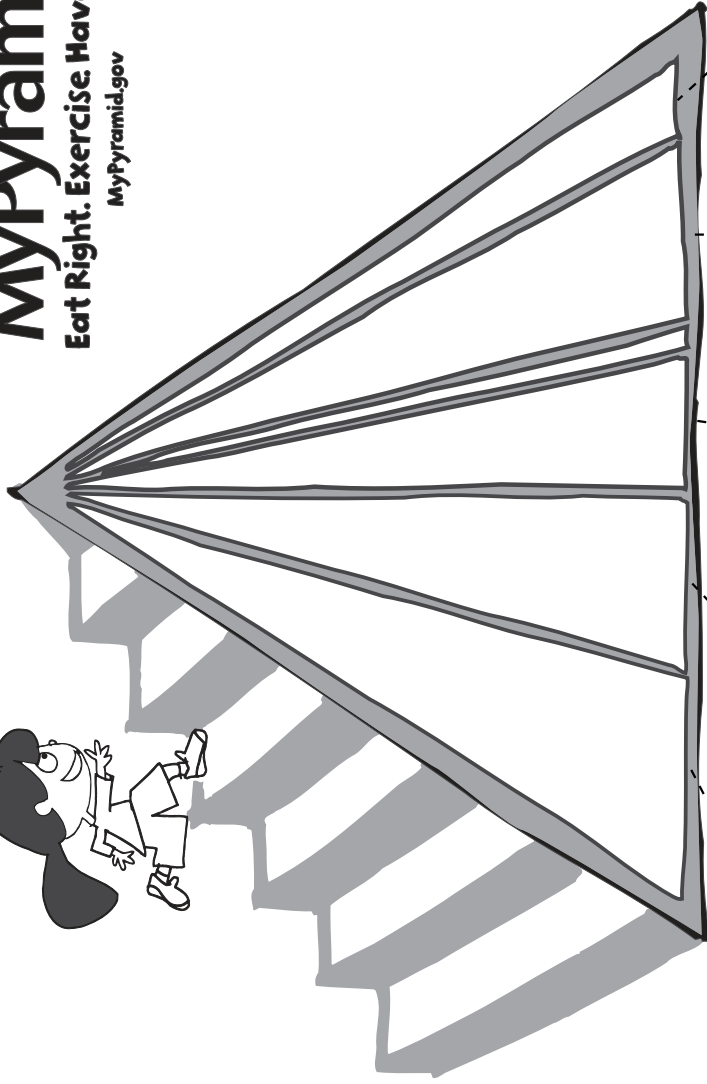
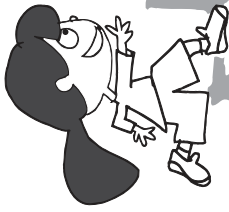


for Preschoolers

MyPyramid

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MyPyramid.gov



Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Milk	Meat & Beans
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Find more fun resources at these Web sites:

teammnutrition.usda.gov
mypyramid.gov/preschoolers

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