



Harvest Objectives

Children will describe and act out the pepper lifecycle.
Children will identify that peppers grow on vines and have seeds inside.
Children will taste a piece of pepper.



Harvest Vocab

Fruit Plant Smooth Vine

Materials & Prep

Peppers (enough for each child to taste small $\frac{1}{4}$ pieces, ideally of at least 3 different colors)
1 Set Pepper Life Cycle large cards (see separate document)
5-10 Sets Pepper Life Cycle small cards (see separate document; set to print 4 pages per sheet and then cut each sheet into quarters for small cards)
Chalkboard/Whiteboard and chalk/whiteboard markers
Images (included at end of learning plan)
Knife & Cutting Board
Taste Test Chart
Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)
Taste Test Extension supplies (optional)

Literature Connections

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert
A Fruit Is a Suitcase for Seeds by Jean Richards
The Vegetables We Eat by Gail Gibons

Warm Up

- In order to engage the children and activate prior knowledge, show them the bell peppers and pass them around so everyone gets to hold and/or touch them. Do not tell them what they are. Tell them to think of the name for the food, but to keep their answer inside their head. Then when everyone has held a bell pepper, ask them, “What is this called?” Consider having everyone say the answer aloud on the count of three, this way you’ll know how many children in the group know. Then discuss, have ever seen one before? Eaten one before? How was it prepared? Where do they think bell peppers come from? How do they grow? (On trees, bushes?)
- In order for the children to explore more about the pepper life cycle, have a common experience, and think about what they know, put them in small groups (of 2-4 children), or have them work independently.
- Using the small cards, tell them that they need to put the cards representing the bell pepper plant life cycle in order, starting with the seed planted in the soil. Allow one or two minutes for them to work and discuss. Check-in with some children. Ask them, “Why do they think one piece goes before, or after, another? How do they know?”



- It is okay if the order is incorrect. Have the children leave the cards in the other they think is best and continue as a large group (below.) Then the children will be able to go back and fix their own mistakes.
- Note: For very young preschool students, have them work independently with an adult, perhaps during small group time, give them only the first two pieces and ask them to put them in order. Then give them the next two, to add on, etc.

Explain

- As a large group, using the large life cycle cards discuss the correct card sequence. Have the children hold up the cards in the correct order, in front of the group or hang them up on a wall.
- Then to review, as a large group have the children act out the entire plant life cycle.
 - Seed—students crouch down into a ball, arms wrapped around knees
 - Germination—legs act as roots and they are slightly stooped over
 - Leaf Growth—stand taller and have their arms act as leaves
 - Flower Growth—their face is the flower and their arms wrap around their face
 - Pollination—one hand turns into a bee, touches their nose, and then respectfully touches a friend's flower (nose)
 - Immature peppers—extend the arms from the nose just a little bit to look like a small pepper
 - Pepper—extend arms completely from the nose to turn into a large pepper
 - Seed Dispersal—pepper falls to the ground, or is picked and eaten by a child for lunch
- Have the children go back to their small cards and make any corrections in the order. For children that need the reinforcement, ask them, “Why do they think one piece goes before, or after, another? How do they know?”
- As a large group, discuss the picture that shows the bell pepper growing on the vine, and explain the word if needed. Can they think of any other foods that grow on vines? (Grapes, pumpkins, some beans, etc.) Explain the word “fruit” (having seeds inside) and tell the children that to plant scientists the pepper is a fruit, but to chefs it is a vegetable. Also explain the word “smooth” and provide other examples, if needed.
- Explain why we should eat bell peppers (healthy eyes, healthy muscles, healthy immune system, and heals cuts) and for each reason come up with an action to help the children remember. For example, for healthy immune system they can shake one finger while saying “no” and then put a hand on their forehead while saying “fever.” Also explain how to pick a good bell pepper (it should be smooth, firm and have no mushy spots.) Please see the last page for image to share with the children.

Taste Test

- After rinsing the peppers, cut quarter pieces for each child to taste. If possible, have two colors available for children to taste. Do they notice any difference in taste? Which one do they like better?



Preschool In-Class Learning Plan Peppers (Bell Peppers)

- Create a chart that says “I Like” with a smiley face and “I Don’t Like” with a sad face. Give each child a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number of children that like peppers, and don’t like peppers, and write that number in each column.
- Review health benefits of eating peppers and how they grow.

Taste Test Extension

Rule of 15 “Put a food on the table at least 15 times to see if a child will accept it.” Susan B. Roberts, Tufts University Nutritionist and Co-author of Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health

For an additional tasting experience, prepare this recipe with children in class using different stations, or ahead of time. Serve it with this lesson, or on a different day to expand the Harvest of the Month experience.

Pepper Salad (for 20 children)

(adapted from: <http://www.superhealthykids.com/healthy-kids-recipes/potluck-party-pepper-salad.php>)

3 bell peppers, chopped (a mix of orange, red, green, and yellow)

1 tomato, chopped

1 red onion, chopped (optional)

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained (optional)

1 avocados, pitted, peeled and chopped (optional)

Mixing Bowls & Spoons

Can opener

Cutting board and knife, Plastic knives

1 plate & wheat cracker (per participant)



1. If you prefer to do all the cutting, do so and have the ingredients ready for the students to mix together. Otherwise rinse and chop the peppers, tomato and onion. Open the avocados and cut into large pieces, saving for each child to cut.
2. Invite children to wash their hands and come to the table for a cooking activity.
3. Demonstrate how to hold the plastic knife handle correctly, and have the children cut the avocado into smaller pieces. Have the children mix the ingredients in a medium bowl and stir. Serve on top of a wheat cracker and enjoy!

How do Bell Peppers grow?

Bell peppers grow on a plant.

After pollination, the bell pepper flowers swell into the bell peppers we eat.



Why should we eat Bell Peppers?

Vitamin A



Healthy eyes

Iron



Healthy muscles

Vitamin C



Healthy immune system (prevents colds)

Vitamin B₆



Healthy brain

Vitamin K



Heals cuts