



Harvest Objectives

Children will identify that cucumbers grow on a vine.
Children will describe and act out the lifecycle of the cucumber.
Children will taste a piece of cucumber.



Harvest Vocab

Firm Smooth Vine

Materials & Prep

1-2 Cucumbers (enough for each child to have ¼ piece)
1 Set Cucumber Life Cycle large cards (see separate document)
5-10 Sets Cucumber Life Cycle small cards (see separate document; set to print 4 pages per sheet and then cut each sheet into quarters for small cards)
Knife & Cutting Board
Images (included at end of learning plan)
Taste Test Chart
Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)

Literature Connections

Cucumber Soup by Vickie Leigh Krudwig
Cool as a Cucumber (Things I Eat series) by Sally Smallwood
Eating the Alphabet: Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert

Warm Up

- In order to engage the children and activate prior knowledge, show them the cucumber and pass them around so everyone gets to hold and/or touch them. Do not tell them what it is. Tell them to think of the name for the food, but to keep their answer inside their head. Then when everyone has held a cucumber, 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 they ever seen one before? Eaten one before? How was it prepared? Where do they think cucumbers come from? How do they grow? (On trees, bushes?)
- In order for the children to explore more about the cucumber life cycle, have a common experience, and think about what they know, put the children in small groups (of 2-3 children), or have them work independently.
- Using the small cards, tell them that they should put the cards representing the cucumber 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 groups. 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 cucumber plant life cycle cards discuss the correct card sequence. Have the children hold up the cards in the correct order, in front of the group.
- Then to review, as a large group have the children act out the entire plant life cycle.
 - Seed—scrouch down into a ball, arms wrapped around knees
 - See germinating— slightly stoop over legs, which act as roots
 - Leaf Growth—stand taller, and put out arms for 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 nose
 - Immature Cucumber—extend the arms from the nose a short ways to turn into an immature cucumber
 - Cucumber-- extend the complete arms from the nose to turn into an immature cucumber
 - Seed Dispersal—cucumber falls to the ground, or is eaten by a student 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 cucumber 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 that plant scientists consider a cucumber to be a fruit because it has seeds inside, but that chefs consider it as a vegetable. Explain the word “smooth” and other examples, if needed.
- Explain why we should eat cucumbers (healthy muscles, heals cuts, and water) and for each reason come up with an action to help the children remember. For example, for water the children can pretend to drink a glass of water. Also explain how to pick a good cucumber (it should be smooth, firm and have no mushy spots.) Please see the next pages for images to share with the children.

Taste Test

- After rinsing the cucumber, cut quarter pieces for each child to taste.
- 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, and don’t like cucumber, and write that number in each column.
- Review with the children that cucumbers grow on a vine and the health benefits.

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.

Cold Cucumber Soup (20 participants)

(Adapted from: <http://www.countryliving.com/recipefinder/cold-cucumber-soup-recipe>)

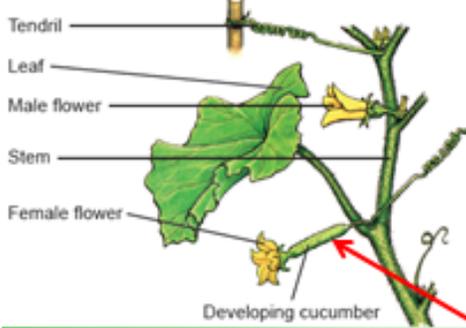


3 medium cucumbers, grated
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt
Mixing Bowl & Spoon
Measuring Spoons

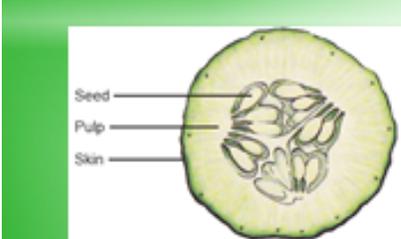
3/4 cup thinly sliced green onions
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 1/2 cup(s) vegetable broth
Knife & Cutting Board
Blender/Food Processor
Bowl and Spoon (1 per child)

1. Rinse the cucumber in running water, and cut it into chunks that are as wide as the hand-grater. Slice the green onions.
2. Invite the children to wash their hands and then come to the table for a cooking activity.
3. Demonstrate how to use the hand grater, by holding the cucumber piece safely away from the grater and pushing downward. Have each child grate some cucumber.
4. Have the children measure and combine: cucumbers, green onions, lemon juice, salt, pepper, in a bowl and mix. Put mixture in blender or food processor, add vegetable broth, and puree.
5. Stir in sour cream and enjoy, or chill first for about 30 minutes.

How do Cucumbers grow?

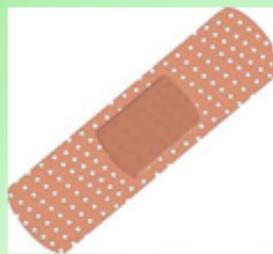


Cucumbers grow on a vine. After pollination, the cucumber flowers swell to become the cucumber we eat.

Why should we eat Cucumbers?

Vitamin K



Heals cuts

Iron



Healthy muscles

Water



Water inside keeps us hydrated