



## Preschool Home Visit Learning Plan

### Beets

### Harvest Objectives

Families will investigate beets, including exploring size, shape, weight, etc.  
Families will identify that beets grow in the ground.  
Families will taste a piece of beet.



### Harvest Vocab

Ground

Firm

Vegetable

### Materials & Prep

3-5 Beets (plus enough for each family member to taste small  $\frac{1}{4}$  pieces, ideally of different varieties: Chioggia--red- and white-striped flesh, Detroit Dark Red--deep red, Golden--carrot-colored flesh, etc.)  
Chalkboard/Whiteboard and chalk/whiteboard markers  
Images (included at end of learning plan)  
Items for station discovery (magnifying glasses, ruler, string of different lengths, balance, scale, tub of water)  
Paper/pencils/crayons (optional)  
Knife & Cutting Board  
Taste Test Chart  
Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)  
Smocks (optional)

### Literature Connections

From Beet to Sugar by Ali Mitgutsch

Tops & Bottoms by Janet Stevens

The Vegetables We Eat by Gail Gibbons

### Warm Up

- In order to engage the family and activate prior knowledge, create a Beet Discovery Lab. On the table place scientific tools such as measuring tapes/rulers, string of different lengths (for measuring), a scale, magnifying glasses, etc. Add the beets and encourage the family members to sort them by color, shape (has a long root, does not have a long root), to weigh and measure them, to lightly tap them. Do they weigh the same? Which are heavy? Light? Do some make a deeper sound than others? Why might that be? Possible questions to explore:
  - How heavy is a beet? Put the beet on one side of the scale and see how many items are needed on the other side to balance the scale.
  - Do beets sink or float? Put the beet in a tub of water. Watch what happens. Put other household items in the tub. Which sink like the beet?
  - How wide are beets? Trace around a beet on a piece of paper. How many fingers can fit inside the traced beet? Three of a parent's? Four of a child's? Take a piece of



- string and measure from one side of the beet to the other. Cut the string and tape it onto the piece of paper.
- Can you make a beet pattern? Using other items around, make a pattern. Beet, paper, beet, paper, beet; or beet, beet, pencil, beet, beet, pencil
  - Cut one of the beets open. Have the family members press the beets on paper to observe the dye. Can they make a picture using beet prints? Note: Consider providing smocks to protect clothing.
  - Add paper, pencils and crayons to the station for the family to draw their observations. Teachers/Home Visitors/Parents can write down the child's observations on each child's paper, or collectively on one large paper.

### **Explain**

- After the family has explored the beets, gather together and share the names of the beets. Explain that botanically they are vegetables (there are no seeds inside). Explain that the main part we eat grows underground, although some people eat steamed beet greens. What other root vegetables can they think of? (Carrots, onion, garlic, etc.) If possible, put out pictures of fruits and vegetables and allow the family to think about which ones are vegetables.
- Explain why we should eat beets (healthy eyes, heals cuts, healthy bones, healthy heart and blood, and healthy immune system) and for each reason come up with an action to help the family remember. For example, they can point at their eyes while saying "healthy eyes." Also explain how to pick good beets (they should be firm when you press them gently). Please see the next pages for images to share with the family.

### **Taste Test**

- Rinse the beets under running water and rub the entire surface to remove any soil. Slice each into pieces. If you have different varieties, before tasting have each family member predict which one he/she thinks will be their favorite. Taste the different varieties and have everyone share which was his/her favorite.
- Create another chart that says "I Like" with a smiley face and "I Need to Try Again" with a question mark. Give each everyone a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number in each group and write that number in each column.
- Naturally, we all want to say if we like or didn't like the taste. But, research shows it can take up to 15 tastes to get our taste buds and minds to "like" some foods. Children should know that our taste buds change over time, and that sometimes we like a food item better based upon the way it is prepared. To help the family keep their minds open to healthy foods consider these responses: "Thumbs up if you like beets right away." "Thumbs up if you need to try again later or try this food prepared another way."
- Review with the family how beets grow and the health benefits.

### **Toddler Tasting**



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To make beet baby food puree, rinse and then peel the beets. Remove tops, if present. Cut the beets into small chunks and steam until tender. Place into blender/food processor and puree. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency. When cool, serve and enjoy!

### 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 the family having each member help in an age-appropriate manner.

#### Beet Chips (for 5-7 people)

(adapted from: <http://tasty-yummies.com/2012/08/08/crispy-baked-beet-chips-gluten-free-vegan/>)

1 Medium beet	1 teaspoon oil
1/4 teaspoon salt	Mixing bowl & spoon
Cookie sheet	Parchment paper, or a bit more oil
Child-safe Mandoline, or knife and cutting board	

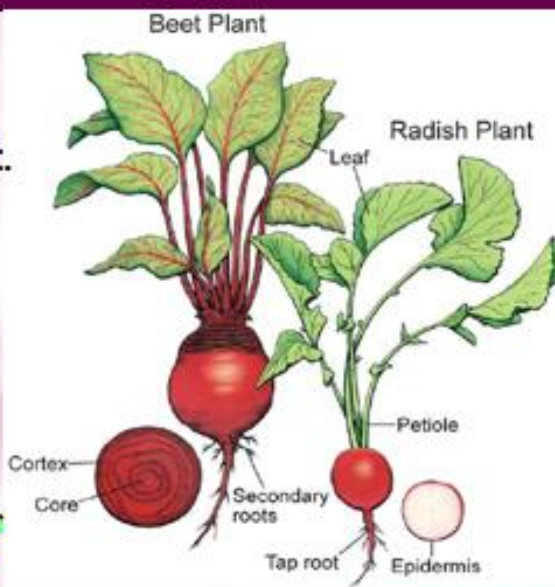


1. All family members should wash their hands.
  - a. Wet hands with warm water
  - b. Apply hand wash (soap)
  - c. Lather and wash for AT LEAST 15 seconds (the length of the ABC song)
  - d. Rinse both sides of hands with water all the way up to the wrists
  - e. Dry hands and shut off faucet with towel
2. Rinse the beets by putting them under running water and rubbing the entire surface to remove any soil.
3. Demonstrate how to use the mandoline and have each family member make 2-3 beet slices. Or, have an adult use the knife and cutting board to slice beets into thin “chips.”
4. Have the family measure and mix beets, salt and oil in mixing bowl.
5. Place beet slices on the cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20 to 30 minutes. Serve and enjoy!

## How do Beets grow?

Beets grow in the ground.

We eat the taproot of the beet.



Why should we eat  
Beets?

Vitamin K Vitamin A Vitamin C



Heals cuts



Healthy eyes



Healthy immune  
system (prevents  
colds)

Riboflavin  
and Folate

Healthy heart  
and blood



Manganese



Healthy bones