



Edible Parts of a Plant

Overview/Description: Students learn about the six parts of a plant (root, stem, leaf, fruit, flower, seed); find and taste edible examples of each in their garden.

Big Idea: Everything we eat comes from plants.

Guiding Question: What plants are we growing in the garden that show us we can eat all six parts?

Grade Level: Any

Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Season: Summer/Fall

Type of Activity: Outdoor Food Exploration

Materials Needed: Table, cutting boards, knife (and a place to tuck it away), receptacles for harvesting, colander, clean water, a way for kids to wash hands.

Preparation: Create a list of plants you have available for harvest that day - making sure each plant part is "represented" somehow. It is also a good idea to have a drawing of a single plant that is labelled with the six parts.

What to do:

- In the Opening Circle, go over the plant drawing and **discuss examples** of each plant part.
- Always **wash hands before harvesting**.
- Tell the students they will be assigned a group/adult and each group will be responsible for **finding examples** of 1 - 2 parts of the plant i.e. One group can be in charge of seeds and flowers while another group is in charge of stems and roots. Each group should bring back 2 - 3 examples of each plant part to share with the group and be able to identify the plant and what part of the plant it is.
- Return to the table for the Closing Circle (with a 10 minute minimum before they head back to class). Students take turns **sharing what they found** while standing with their group. During this time an adult should wash and cut plant parts for kids to taste.
- Students hold out their "plates" (one hand) and choose items from the cutting boards to **taste**.
- Note: to save time, try having examples of edible plant parts washed, cut, and ready to taste before beginning the activity.

Teaching Points:

- All food we eat comes directly or indirectly from plants. We eat fruit and vegetables that come straight from plants; bread comes from the wheat plant; meat, milk, and eggs come from animals that eat plants.
- We cannot eat all parts of all plants - we wouldn't eat the leaf of rhubarb (poisonous) or the roots of an apple tree (yuck!)

Edible Root Vegetables: Carrot, turnip, radish, beet, garlic, onion, ginger, potato.

Edible Stem Vegetables: Celery, asparagus, broccoli stem, beet stem, rhubarb,

Edible Leaves: Lettuce, cabbage, herbs, mint, kale, spinach, chives, grape leaf, fava bean leaf

Edible Flowers: Nasturtium, pansy, basil, chive, apple, flowers on broccoli and cauliflower, borage, squash blossoms, rose, lavender, sunflower petals

Edible Fruits of the Plant: Apple, pear, blueberry, raspberry, tomato, cucumber, pumpkin and other squash

Edible Seeds of the Plant: Sunflower seeds, peas, pumpkin seed, nuts, beans, corn

- If students are ready for this kind of betrayal, you can let them know that:
 - **Tubers** such as potatoes are not a root but a modified stem!
 - **Bulbs** such as onion and garlic are not roots but modified stems!

For extended lessons:

- Students make a salad using six parts of the plant.
- Ask what their favorite fruit or vegetable is, let them determine what part of the plant it is.