

EAT

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Ask the children to examine the food seasonality poster in the cafeteria to see if they can identify a green vegetable that is typically harvested in the spring. Have the students consider what part of the plant they would eat if they ate that vegetable. Discuss their observations and ideas when the students return back from lunch.

Answer: Peas (seed)

LEARN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objective

Students will name fruits and vegetables typically harvested in the spring, summer, fall, and winter.

10 Minute Lesson

Through a teacher-guided discussion, children will learn what plants need to grow and understand the reason for eating fruits and vegetables in season.

LIVE

Home Activity

Instruct the students to accompany an adult when they go food shopping and look for a fresh green leafy vegetable typically harvested in the spring- for example, lettuce, spinach, kale, collards.

Teacher's Notes

Background

For the greatest nutritional value and flavor choose fruits and vegetables harvested at the peak of their freshness. See the guide below to help you choose the freshest fruits and vegetables in season:

Summer- Beets, Blackberries, Blueberries, Broccoli, Chinese Cabbage, Corn Cucumber, Eggplant, Green Beans, Nectarines, Peaches, Plums, Raspberries, Summer Squash, Tomatoes, Watermelon, Zucchini

Fall- Acorn Squash, Apples, Belgian Endive, Butternut Squash, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Figs, Garlic, Ginger, Grapes, Mushrooms, Parsnips, Pears, Pomegranate, Pumpkin, Quince, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard

Winter- Chestnuts, Grapefruit, Kale, Leeks, Oranges, Radicchio, Radishes, Rutabaga, Tangerines, Turnips

Spring- Apricots, Artichoke, Asparagus, Celeriac, Chives, Collards, Fava Beans, Fennel, Mango, Morels, Mustard Greens, New Potatoes, Pineapple, Rhubarb, Spinach, Spring Baby Lettuce Mixes, Strawberries, Sugar Snap and Snow Peas, Vidalia Onions, Watercress

10 Minute Lesson

Explain: Plants need certain things in order to grow properly and produce the best quality fruits and vegetables that provide the best nutrients. Plants need:

- 1. Room to grow-the above ground portions of the plants need space so leaves can expand and the below ground portion needs room for the roots to grow.*
- 2. Temperature-Certain plants grow better in particular climates.*
- 3. Light-Needed for photosynthesis.*
- 4. Water-Important for the plants ability to make nutrients.*
- 5. Air- Plants use carbon dioxide in the air and return oxygen. Air pollutants can damage plants.*
- 6. Nutrients-Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.*
- 7. Time-It takes time to grow.*

Definitions:

Nitrogen-Gives plants a green color and helps them make a lot of green leaves.

Phosphorous-Helps plants to make more or larger flowers and build a strong root system.

Potassium-Helps plants fight off diseases and provides for strong stems.

Problem Solving:

How do you think bad weather in a growing area can affect your fruits and vegetables you get in the store? For example if there is a drought during the orange growing season, how do you think it will affect the crop? *The orange trees will be dry and shriveled and may not produce as much fruit.*

The oranges might not be as juicy or taste as good, the color may not be good, and the price could go up because there are fewer oranges available to sell to everyone. The price of orange juice would go up also because there would not be as many oranges to juice or the oranges would not produce as much juice.

Introduce and explain the EAT Cafeteria Connection and LEARN Home Activity to the students.

Optional Enrichment Ideas

Start a small lettuce garden in the classroom. Use a plastic heavy duty sealing type freezer (pint or quart size) bag and fill it $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way with moist potting soil. Plant lettuce seeds in the soil. Water the seeds. Close the top of the bag almost all the way, but leave 1 inch open for the plant to breath. Keep the plant near a window to get sunlight.

When you see little green shoots open up the bag so that it has room to grow and breathe. See detailed instructions

online- <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/gpe/case1/c1a.html>