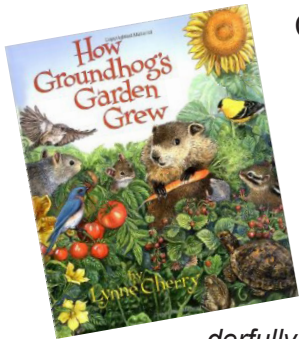


Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

SUGGESTED STUDENT READING



Cherry, Lynne.

How Groundhog's Garden Grew.

We know what you're thinking...groundhogs usually eat the garden, not grow it! This includes detailed illustrations that give a lot of information by themselves with a wonderfully written story to tie it all together.



Coy, John.

Two Old Potatoes and Me.

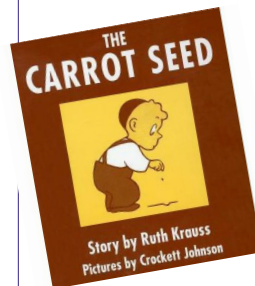
This is a wonderful new book that tells the story of growing potatoes, with a recipe for mashed potatoes at the end. Also a subtle comment on divorce/separation to give comfort to children who might be experiencing that themselves.



Ehlert, Lois. Growing Vegetable Soup.

Reed Business Information, Inc.
This is the boldest, brassiest garden book to hit the market, and what a delight. Intensely colored graphics capture the complete growing process

from seed to cooking pot, with the focus on the plants. The unseen narrator describes the process of growing vegetable soup, from preparing the tools and digging holes for the seeds to weeding plants; picking vegetables; washing, chopping, and cooking them and finally enjoying the home-made soup while planning to grow more next year. It's a fresh presentation of the gardening cycle with a joyful conclusion, and the added attraction of an



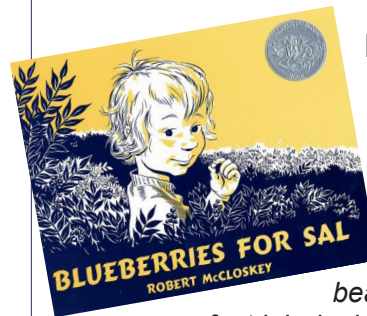
Krauss, Ruth.

The Carrot Seed.

HarperCollins Children's Books

A little boy just knows that a carrot will grow from the seed that he plants--whatever his family may believe--in this

brief classic story of childhood faith rewarded. Ages: 5 to 8



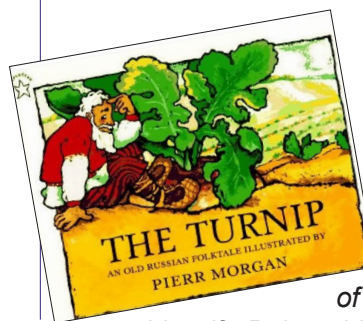
McCloskey, Robert.

Blueberries For Sal.

Penguin Group.

This simple story of a mother and daughter picking blueberries, and a mother bear and baby bear eating blueberries, does

a perfect job depicting the sweetness of the mother/child relationship. It shows the protective nature of loving mothers and the security a child feels when with his/her mother. And it's a great example of two families preparing for winter by picking (or eating, as the case may be) blueberries.



Morgan, Pierr.

The Turnip.

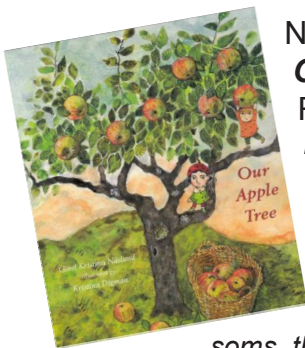
The turnip seed that Dedoushka planted grew and grew and grew, and now it's too big to pull up! Dedoushka can't pull it out of the ground, and neither can his wife Baboushka. Everyone pulls together,



Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

SUGGESTED STUDENT READING (cont.)

even Keska the cat, but it's not until help comes from a most unexpected source that the giant vegetable finally comes out.



Naslund, Goret Kristina.
Our Apple Tree.

Roaring Brook Press.

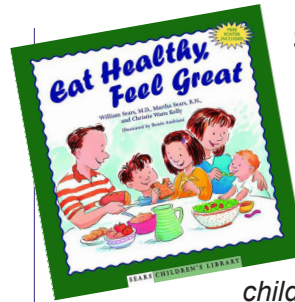
Here's a whimsical and very useful look at the life cycle of the apple tree. With two helpful tree sprites as guides, readers travel from spring, when the apple tree blossoms, through summer, when the fruit grows, to fall and the harvest. Along the way, you'll learn about the life of the tree and the animals that visit - from insects that pollinate the flowers to deer that eat the fallen fruit.



Richards, Jean. **A Fruit Is A Suitcase For Seeds.**

Millbrook Press.

Richards's carefully worded information provides an excellent introduction to seeds, their purpose, and growth that should be easy for young children to grasp. On each page, one or two short lines of text appear beneath a large painting. Hariton's use of bright watercolors adds sensual appeal to her illustrations of various fruits, vegetables, animals, and habitats. This cleverly presented book can be used as a read-aloud discussion starter, as a prelude to planting seeds and observing their growth, or in preparation for dissecting fruits and vegetables in order to find the seeds inside. Ages: PreSchool-Grade 2

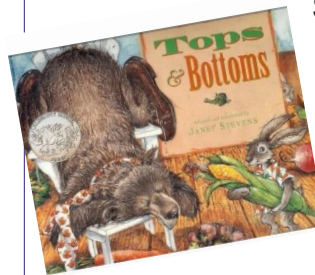


Sears, William, M.D., and
Sears, Martha, R.N.

Eat Healthy, Feel Great.

Little, Brown and Company.

A wonderful resource for parents who are trying to "do the right thing" -- to teach their children healthy eating habits in the midst of a society that promotes the fast, processed, and packaged. Dr. Sears categorizes food into green light/yellow light/red light groups, and it's a concept children readily understand. The text is simple and clear, and the message is presented in a fun way. This book would be a big help to any parents interested in changing their families' eating habits for the better. There are parts in the book that are just for parents: they explain nutrition, as well as make suggestions on how to incorporate more "green light" foods in the family's meals.



Stevens, Janet.

Tops & Bottoms.

Harcourt Books.

Hare solves his family's problems by tricking rich and lazy Bear in this funny, energetic version of an old slave story. With roots in American slave tales, Tops & Bottoms celebrates the trickster tradition of using one's wits to overcome hardship. "As usual, Stevens' animal characters, bold and colorful, are delightful. It's all wonderful fun, and the book opens, fittingly, from top to bottom instead of from side to side, making it perfect for story-time sharing."



BEST PRACTICES FOR USING PRODUCE FROM SCHOOL GARDENS

School Gardens serve as exciting living laboratories and are an important component of Farm to School efforts. The bounty from school gardens can contribute to the school cafeteria, students' families, or be used in classroom and afterschool taste-testing activities.

The following practices are intended to provide basic food safety guidelines for those involved with school gardens. They include principles from Good Agricultural Practices and safe food handling procedures and are intended to serve as a framework that may easily be adapted to meet individual school settings and regional requirements. The safety benefits of fresh food grown on site include the avoidance of potential contamination that accompanies long-distance travel (where products frequently change hands) and control over the supply chain direct from garden to table.

Safe handling information should be provided to students, teachers, and others involved in growing, harvesting, and preparing. In addition to the many benefits of fresh food, healthy activity, and learning, your school garden can be an educational tool that helps teach students about food safety procedures.

Growing Practices

All organic matter should be fully composted in aerobic conditions and at high temperatures prior to application. Avoid raw manure and limit composted manure to what can be purchased from a commercial outlet to ensure traceability.

When using water for irrigation make sure it is potable and from a tested source. Check with your state cooperative extension or state health offices for simple testing kits.

If soil used for growing is coming from school property, test for contaminants before planting. Testing kits are usually available through your state same as water testing above.

There are many places to purchase seeds for your school garden, so be conscious of where your seeds come from and consider source and quality. Look for those that are preferably non-genetically modified, and come from companies that have taken a "safe seed pledge."

No synthetic pesticides or herbicides should be used, preventing toxic residue on food and avoiding human and environmental exposure to pesticides. Materials used for garden beds, containers, stakes or trellises should be constructed of non-toxic, non-leaching material (no pressure treated wood or used tires).

Harvesting and Handling

Students, staff, parents or volunteers involved in harvesting should wash hands thoroughly in warm prior to harvesting. Anyone with open cuts or wounds on their extremities should not participate in harvest until they have healed.

All harvesting tools--scissors, bowls, tubs-- should be food-grade and/or food service approved and designated solely for harvest and



Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

BEST PRACTICES FOR USING PRODUCE FROM SCHOOL GARDENS *(cont.)*

food handling. The tools should be cleaned regularly with hot water and soap, then dried.

School Garden produce delivered for use in a school cafeteria should be received and inspected by food service personnel upon delivery with the same system used to receive and inspect all other incoming products.

If storage is necessary, produce should be cooled and refrigerated promptly after harvest. Temperatures vary on type of produce being harvested; specific post-harvest storage and transportation temperatures can be found at www.postharvest.ucdavis.edu/produce/storage/index.shtm

School Garden produce should be washed according to the same standards that the cafeteria has in place for conventionally received produce. A person with ServSafe or comparable food-safety certification should supervise students, parents, or staff who participate in any food preparation—i.e. taste-testings or special cafeteria events.

Other Considerations and Recommendations

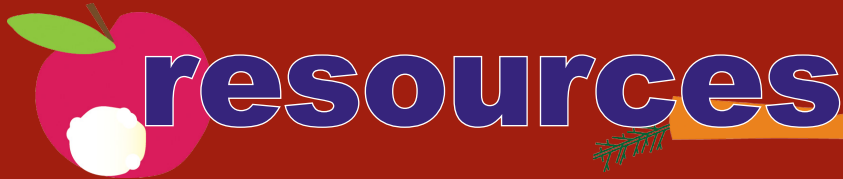
Those planning and planting the school garden should review your school's rules and regulations. Some plants that can cause serious allergic reactions may be prohibited.

If the garden is near parking areas or other high-traffic zones, consider testing for contaminants before growing fruits and vegetables. Many states have agriculture extension services that can help with this. If building a raised-bed garden, consider purchasing soil meant for food production from an established retail entity to ensure soil safety and traceability.

If your school has a composting program for cafeteria waste, use the resulting compost for flowers, ornamental plants and trees rather than for garden beds where food is grown. Compost that comes from garden waste can be applied to food-growing beds if deemed appropriate by the school garden supervisor and/or compost coordinator.

Be sure to coordinate with school grounds-keeping or custodial staff about your garden's goals, protocols and maintenance plan. If you are concerned about the presence of pesticides on or near your garden, be sure to communicate that, too. Consider using your school garden as an educational tool that can teach students about food safety procedures and incorporate curricula that teach to these issues in your garden educational plan. Be sure that your school garden program is aligned with any relevant school district policies including, but not limited to, wellness policies, school procedures for receiving gifts and donations, working with parent and community volunteers, and liability policies.

These best practices were created as a collaborative effort among school garden practitioners from across the country. Thanks to Kelly Erwin, Deb Habib, Tegan Hagy, Noli Hoyer, Dana Hudson, Marion Kalb, Emily Jackson, Catherine Sands, and Amy Winston. This was created with the support of the National Farm to School Network www.farmtoschool.org



SAFETY TIPS FOR COOKING WITH KIDS

Eliminate Interferences

Tie back long hair, pull up long sleeves, and secure other articles of clothing that could pose safety or hygiene risks.

Hand Hygiene

Wash hands with soap and warm water before touching any food or utensils. Gloves are not required if the food you are preparing will ultimately be cooked, but they are recommended if the food will be served raw. Encourage arm sneezing, and stress the importance of not touching your face, hair, etc. once hands are clean.

Clean Cooking Area

Start with a clean workspace. Clean all counter tops and surfaces before preparing food on them.

Set-Up

Prepare work stations ahead of time with ingredients and proper tools.

Work in Small Groups

Cooking with children is most successful when they can work in small groups of no more than 4-5, ideally with an adult per group. Younger children benefit from even smaller groups. Increase the adult-child ratio by involving parent volunteers in classroom cooking activities.

A Job for Everyone

Include every student in the cooking process by assigning everyone a job. This may mean giving each student a small task or even making up additional jobs. Tasks can include reading the recipe aloud, checking to be sure you have included all

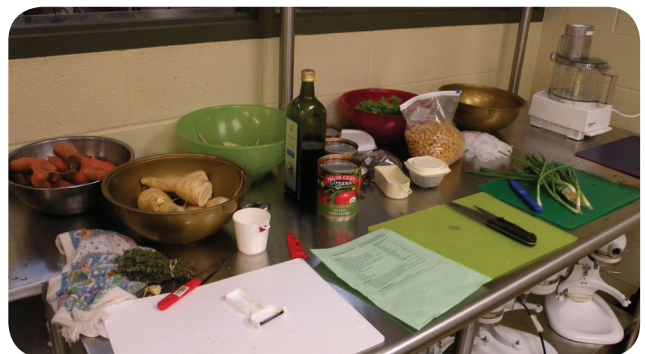
the ingredients, washing produce or dishes, drying dishes, measuring, stirring or helping another student. Every job is important and it is easy for children to get excited with the task at hand.

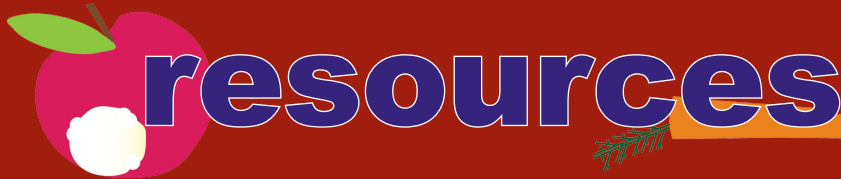
Knife Safety

Be careful with knives and other sharp tools such as graters and peelers. Instill the importance and responsibility that comes with handling knives and kitchen equipment. Teach children the proper ways to hold, wash, carry, and store these tools. Most children take this responsibility very seriously.

Use the Right Tool for the Job

Kids can cut too, as long as you give them a safe and appropriate knife for the task. As an introduction to knife use, you can use plastic disposable knives, plastic knives from a kids' set, or a butter or dinner knife with a less-than sharp serrated edge and a rounded point. Herbs, peeled fruit, and soft vegetables like zucchini, cucumbers, and tomatoes will yield to these kid-friendly knives. Sometimes a sharper or larger knife is a more appropriate tool for a cutting job and, with proper use, can be a safer option than trying to cut something with an inadequate





SAFETY TIPS FOR COOKING WITH KIDS *(cont.)*

tool. Attempting to cut harder vegetables or foods with a dull or inadequately sized knife can increase risk of injury, so select a tool that is appropriate for the job. Use your discretion in gauging the readiness of your students for using more professional cutting tools and always monitor use closely. For any knife use, always demonstrate proper cutting technique first.

Cutting Techniques

Place a wet paper towel under your cutting board to prevent it from slipping around on the table.

Use a claw-like grip (with fingers curled slightly under) to hold the food steady on the cutting board - the knuckles act as a bumper and finger tips are kept away from the knife blade.

Before cutting rounded objects, such as potatoes, carrots, or zucchini, give the food a flat edge so that it does not roll around on the cutting board. Do this by cutting a small slice from one side of the food so that it can lie flat on your work surface.

Tools stay with the cutting board.

Demonstrate

Always demonstrate the correct cut, size, technique, etc. before handing the task over to the kids.

Reading the Recipe

Ask a child to read each instruction aloud as you prepare the food. Kids will get a sense of turn-taking and sequencing from following directions in order. This also helps to pace the process so that you can focus on one job at a time and avoid multiple distractions.

Make Clean-Up Part of the Routine

Cleaning up is an important part of the cooking process and kids may love using a mop or dustpan as much as they love the food preparation. But save cleaning until the cake is in the oven!

Taste!

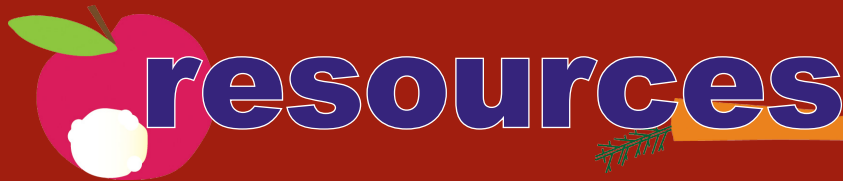
Have the students taste the food they are preparing. Encourage the practice of trying new things, but never force anyone to eat something against their will. Try offering the option of a “No, thank you” bite if someone is really hesitant to taste the food. Also keep cleanliness in mind when tasting the food – use clean tasting utensils to prevent contamination.

Trying New Foods

Encourage students to try new foods, but never force them to eat food they do not like. Model healthy choices by eating food with the students. Establish a routine with students for sitting down and eating food together as a group.

“Don’t Yuck My Yum” Rule

Remind students that we do not say negative things about how something tastes because it might offend someone and discourage others from trying something new. If a student tries something that she or he does not like, request that they quietly spit it out in a napkin so other students have an opportunity to form their own opinions. Encourage students to use respectful language like “I don’t care for it.” Remind students that sometimes it takes trying new things 10 times before you begin to like them.



Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

TOP 10 PLANTS TO GROW WITH KIDS



Carrots: Carrots are the buried treasure in a kids garden and come in a rainbow of colors — orange, red, yellow and purple. Imagine a snowman with a purple nose. Tiny hands can easily dig carrots with child size shovels.



Potatoes: Most kids know and love this vegetable. Spuds come in a rainbow of color — from gold to purple — and your own garden of potatoes can be an exciting, colorful scene of endless hunts for tasty, buried treasures. They can be carved into stamps for printing and a Mr. Potato-Head can be made by decorating with fruits and vegetables for the face.



Beans: Beans come in different shapes, sizes and color. Children can create their own tee pee! Anchor bamboo stakes in the soil, plant a pole bean seed at the bottom of each stake, and watch the vine start to climb! Beans are easy to save for seeds.



Cherry Tomatoes: These may be the most fun crop for a child. Kids can pluck them right off the vine for a sweet, healthy snack. They love to pick, eat and watch them grow from tiny plants into a tangled mess. Their favorites are the tiny golden currant, the red cherry and sungold.



Sunflowers: A must for a kid garden! The seeds are big and easy for little hands to hold. Kids can plant these to form towering, protective walls around playhouses, castles, tents and meandering mazes, or plant them in a circle for a sunflower house. Plant a variety with edible seeds — kids love them.



Corn: Is a source of wonder for kids, they find it hard to believe that seedlings will someday produce exploding kernels or a whole harvest of jewel toned ears. Planting these to make a maze will be great fun for the kids to go through to see if they can find their way out. Try planting popcorn for eating or colored corn for autumn and thanksgiving decorations.



Pumpkins: These win all the popularity contests. Pumpkins of any size, giant or tiny are great to watch them grow, turn orange and pick them when they are ready. Some you can eat, paint, make a jack-o-lantern or just use for decoration. The seeds are big and easy for little hands to plant, and they germinate quickly.



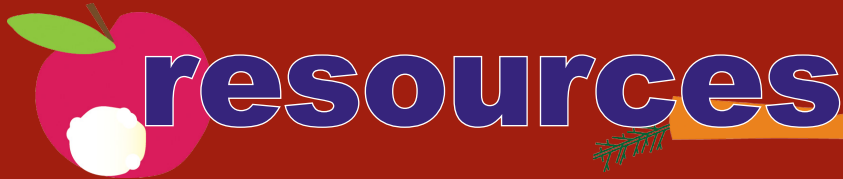
Garlic: While most of the garden is being put to rest in the fall, you can still plant garlic. Big cloves are easy for kids to plant. In the spring when you go to prepare your garden, what a surprise to see this already coming up! Garlic scapes in early summer are a wonderful first harvest.



Radishes: A quick and reliable crop to give kids fast results and a good way to interest kids in salads. They come in a medley of colors and shapes with some growing to size of a baseball.



Wheat: Watch wheat grow and turn from green to a golden color. Kids will enjoy grinding the wheat into flour to make bread.



SOURCING VERMONT FRUITS & VEGETABLES

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is an opportunity to support your neighborhood farmer by buying local.

Is This Allowed?

YES, the USDA encourages schools to purchase locally for this program.

- Local farms and orchards are considered approved sources
- Local suppliers do not need any special licensing to sell whole produce to schools

Why Buy Local?

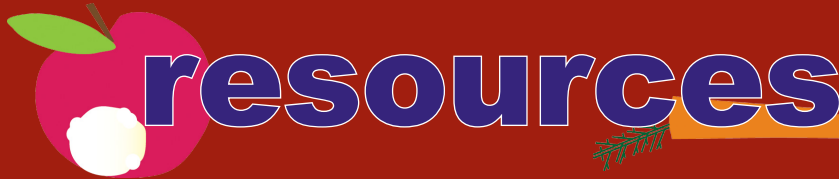
- Tastes better – Crops are ripened in the field and harvested when nutritional content and flavor are at their peak.
- Supports local economy - More dollars return directly to the farmer.
- Reduces carbon footprint – Produce does not travel far from farm to plate.

Local Purchasing Considerations

- Seasonality - Some Vermont grown produce is available through much of the school year (root crops), some only in September and October.
- Usually only whole produce will be available from local farms
- Review relevant details with local producers:
 - Labeled, clean boxes, case sizes
 - Delivery and billing arrangements

Where to Find Local Produce

- Ask your distributor what Vermont produce they currently carry and encourage them to carry more
- Vermont distributors who specialize in local produce:
 - Black River Produce
 - Upper Valley Produce
- Farmers' Markets and Farm Stands
- Contact these Programs for local produce delivery or a list of local farmers in your area:
 - Addison County Relocalization Network acornvt.org
 - Food Connects • foodconnects.org
 - Green Mountain Farm to School greenmountainfarmtoschool.org
 - Rutland Area Food and Farm Link rutlandfarmandfood.org
 - Upper Valley Farm to School uvfts.org
 - VT FEED • vtfeed.org
 - Windham Farm and Food harvesttomarket.com
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture Buy Local Directories vermontagriculture.com/buylocal



6 STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING A TASTE TEST PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL

From: *A Guide to Taste Testing Local Food in Schools* by Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day)

1 Know your goals.

Before doing a taste test, establish a few goals that are easy to communicate. Are you implementing a taste test program to expand children's food choices? Encouraging more healthy snack or lunch choices brought from home? Do you want to broaden the school lunch or breakfast menu? Do you want to introduce local foods?

2 Develop a food committee.

Meet with the food service director or head cook to discuss possibilities, and then with the school principal to discuss your goals and make a plan. Find parents and teachers who are supportive of the idea of a taste testing program. Your best allies are the people who work with the students every day. Most teachers will support a program, but be careful about adding to their workloads. If your focus is on local food, find an area farmer who can supply produce to your school and who would be willing to speak to a class or come for part of a taste test. Meet with food service personnel to communicate your ideas and to discuss ways to use local foods in the school menu. Think about the VT FEED "3 C's" model (classroom, cafeteria, community): representatives from each of the C's should be part of your team. With food service personnel, your committee can decide how often taste tests should occur, what format (in the cafeteria or classrooms), what foods to try, and how to fund the foods being tested (PTO's make great partners). They can also help analyze taste test results.

3 Start small and think through the details.

With the committee, decide what food you first want to feature. Where will you get it? (Perhaps your school wants to build a relationship with a nearby farm where you know you can get local potatoes.) What recipe will you try? (roasted potatoes, maybe?) How much will the ingredients cost? (Will the farmer donate potatoes just for tasting? Is the school food service willing to spend extra money?) Does the kitchen have the staff and equipment to prepare the food? How will the food be ordered? Who will prepare it? If the students like the new food, is the recipe repeatable on the lunch or breakfast line? Be sure to meet and talk through all these questions with the school food service director and cooking staff.

4 Be respectful of food service personnel and teachers.

Food service personnel have a tough job, take pride in what they cook, and are busy. Teachers and other school personnel have a lot of time demands, too. Everyone has the same goal—to feed our children the freshest healthiest food possible, but we may have different ideas on how to get there.



Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

6 STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING A TASTE TEST PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL *(cont.)*

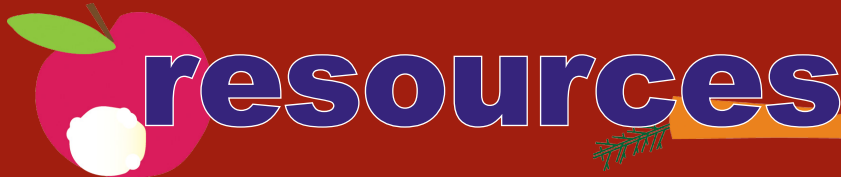
5 Offer hands-on experiences.

Children learn best when they are actively involved and using their hands. Children who help prepare food for a taste test are more likely to try it, and like it than children who have not been involved. If at all possible, include monthly hands-on lessons in the classroom or cafeteria so students have the chance to participate in making the food. See sample VT FEED curriculum units at www.vtfeed.org for ideas on how to integrate taste testing foods into curriculum.

6 Just do it! Meet with teachers and food service staff to find a date that works for a taste test. Invite parents to help, either in your weekly newsletter or through a special invitation. If you are considering a classroom taste test program, find a time each week or month that fits well into the class schedule. (Snack time is usually a good time.) Encourage teachers and staff to be a part of the taste tests, integrate the information into their curriculum (if possible), and help model healthy eating behaviors. If you plan to conduct cafeteria taste tests during lunchtime, encourage staff members to be involved in the testing, or sample along with the students. By getting the whole school involved, you are more likely to

have a successful program. Once you have had one or two successful taste tests, invite your local political figures and the local paper to see for themselves that your school is making some school food changes.





Materials to inspire your USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Video

This brief video explains easy ways to incorporate nutrition education into your Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

[youtube.com/watch?v=raERlkbdarQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raERlkbdarQ)

USDA

- Team Nutrition ***Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More***
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/fv_galore.html
- Food and Nutrition Service – School Meals
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program Handbook
fns.usda.gov/cnd/FFVP/handbook.pdf

Resources from Vermont FEED

- vtfeed.org/tools

Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools

- fns.usda.gov/fns/safety/pdf/best_practices.pdf
- <http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20100826093915.pdf>
- learningzonexpress.com/



VERMONT HARVEST CALENDAR

Eat with the seasons! This calendar presents the diverse array of farm products that are available throughout the seasons at local farmers markets, farm stands and retail stores. Eating food when it's in season means flavor and nutritional value are at their peak and cost is often at its lowest. Find out when your favorite fruits and veggies are freshest and which products are **in season now**.

January	February	March	April	May	June
Apples Beets Cabbage Carrots Celeriac Garlic Parsnips Potatoes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Cabbage Carrots Onions Parsnips Potatoes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Carrots Onions Parsnips Potatoes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Carrots Parsnips Potatoes Turnips 	Asparagus Greens Parsnips Radishes Rhubarb Scallions Spinach 	Asparagus Chard Greens Lettuce Peas Radishes Rhubarb Scallions Spinach Strawberries 
July	August	September	October	November	December
Beans Beets Broccoli Carrots Cauliflower Fennel Greens Kale Lettuce Melons Peas Potatoes Radishes Raspberries Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Tomatoes Turnips 	Apples Beans Beets Blackberries Blueberries Broccoli Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chard Corn Cucumbers Eggplant Fennel Garlic Greens Kale Leeks Lettuce Melons Onions Peas Peppers Potatoes Radishes Raspberries Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Tomatoes Turnips Watermelon 	Apples Beans Beets Blueberries Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Chard Corn Cucumbers Eggplant Fennel Greens Kale Leeks Lettuce Onions Parsnips Peppers Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Raspberries Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Tomatoes Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beans Beets Blueberries Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celery Celeriac Chard Celery Kale Leeks Onions Parsnips Peppers Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Rutabaga Scallions Spinach Summer Squash Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Celeriac Celery Chard Kale Leeks Onions Parsnips Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash 	Apples Beets Brussel Sprouts Cabbage Carrots Celeriac Garlic Kale Onions Parsnips Potatoes Pumpkins Radishes Rutabaga Turnips Winter Squash  <p>*Fruit or vegetable comes into season this month.</p>