

Where is food grown in your community?

Activity: Exploring Vegetables



Learning Objective: Expose youth to new vegetables through their senses. **Service Objective:** Invite youth to identify where food is grown in their community and report farms and gardens on the University of California Cooperative Extension on-line map.

Activity Instructions

1. Opening prompts: Ask youth the types of vegetables they like.
2. Break youth into groups of 3 or 4.
3. In groups, have youth rotate from station to station and use their senses to explore the vegetables by feel, smell, and taste. Invite youth to record the labels and then try to guess the vegetables.
4. As a whole class, discuss what youth observed, felt, smelled, and tasted. Ask the class to discuss what vegetable they think was in each labeled container.
5. As a class, have youth process and generalize what they've learned. For example, in small groups, have youth discuss which vegetables are grown in their community. Have groups report findings to the entire class.

Taking it Further

- **For young youth:** Invite children to draw their favorite vegetable. Ask them to add what the vegetable needs to grow. Ask them where it is grown.
- Go for a walk around the school or neighborhood and draw a map of where they find food growing. Have groups present their maps to the class.
- **For older youth:** Ask each group to discuss how vegetables, food, and farms relate to California. For example, the economics and history of food, social and political connections, biology and ecology, health and nutrition.
- Link this activity to the pollinator and water activities. Invite small groups to discuss connections between water, pollinators, and food. Have groups present to the class.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials

- Variety of vegetables; select some that are locally grown.
 - ◆ Vegetables with texture and shape (potato, cauliflower)
 - ◆ Vegetables with strong aromas (onion, herbs)
 - ◆ Vegetables to taste
- Small paper bags
- Paper plates
- Tape
- Plastic containers

Preparation

1. Prepare feely bags that contain a vegetable. Close the bag but leave enough space for hands.
2. Prepare smelly containers that contain sliced/chopped vegetables. Two plates taped together with small holes works well.
3. Prepare several of the vegetables for tasting. Consider several common and some uncommon vegetables.
4. Number each container.

On May 8: Be a Scientist!

Ask youth to identify places in their school, neighborhood and community where food is grown. Record answers from youth and submit using the on-line map at beascientist.ucanr.edu. Share with youth what others are reporting from across the entire state!



Adapted from *Eating Health from Farm to Fork*, UCCE 2013.

Connections to the Next Generation Science Standards: LS2.A: Interdependent relationships in ecosystems. ESS3.C: Human impacts on Earth systems.

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