

## ***Activity: Edible Plants***

### ***Activity Level: Basic***

Source: Adapted from Arizona Agriculture in the Classroom

#### **Purpose**

Identify whether common plants we eat are seeds, roots, stems, leaves, fruit, or flowers.

#### **Example Topics It Supplements**

Uses of plants; vegetable production

#### **Activity Snapshot**

1. Organize and Prepare Supplies
2. Read Background Information
3. Interest Approach
4. Conduct Activity  
Use a live plant or picture of a plant to explain the different parts of the plant. Discuss the parts of plants we eat each day. Complete the Edible Plant Parts handout.
5. Ask follow up questions and make the connection to agriculture.
  - What did we learn about the parts of the plant that we eat?
  - Were you surprised by some of the plant parts we eat? Why or why not?
  - How are all of these plants connected to agriculture?
  - What can we share with others about what we learned?

#### **State Standards It Supports**

Science 2.3.1.c—Identify external parts of plants and animals.  
Science 5.3.1.b—Identify how parts of plants and animals function to meet basic needs.

#### **Materials**

- Live plant or picture of a plant
- Samples of vegetables and fruit(s) found on handout (*optional*)
- Handout “Edible Plant Parts”—1 per student

#### **What’s the Connection to Agriculture?**

It is important to know that much of our food comes from plants, and that we eat different parts of different plants. Farmers produce plants for animals and humans to eat. The fruits and vegetables we eat each day are seeds, roots, stems, leaves, fruits, and flowers.

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**PROCEDURES:**

1. Organize and Prepare Supplies  
See “Materials” on cover page.

2. Background Information

The fruits and vegetables we eat come from different parts of the plant. Many students may not make the connection that when they sit down for a meal, they are eating a seed, root, or stem. There are six edible plant parts: seed (reproductive part of plant); root (part of plant typically underground providing water and nourishment); stem (main body or stalk of plant); leaf (flat and green—attached to stem); fruit (sweet and fleshy product of tree/plant and contains seeds); flower (brightly colored petals and bears seed). Farmers grow plants for us to eat. It is important for students to know and understand why farmers grow a certain fruit or vegetable—it is because we eat the seed, root, stem, leaf, fruit, or flower.

3. Interest Approach

Pose the question: What do you love to eat? Have students respond with answers. Ask them to share where they believe that food item comes from. *Expected responses will vary.* Explain all food we eat comes from agriculture—some from animals and some from plants. Today’s focus will be on what we eat that comes from plants.

4. Conduct Activity

- a) Have a live plant or picture of a plant and talk about the parts of the plant. Have students identify a seed, root, stem, leaf, fruit, and flower. Ask what they know about each part.
- b) Pose question: What part of plants do we eat? *Expected responses: fruit, etc. Students may not understand that we eat different parts of plants.*
- c) Explain that farmers grow crops and plants for both animals and humans to eat. When we eat a vegetable, we are usually eating one part of the plant.
- d) Give each student the Edible Plant Parts handout. Have students draw a picture of the plant part above each column.
- e) Have students complete the worksheet using one of the following options: 1) work independently or with a partner to complete the worksheet; 2) complete the worksheet as a class, asking students to “vote” on which answer is correct; 3) complete worksheet at home with parents/guardians and bring it back to class the next day. *Note: if using option 1 or 2, consider finding pictures and/or have real examples of each of the plants listed to help students see and understand each one. If possible, have students taste some of the plants they aren’t familiar with.*

5. Ask Follow Up Questions and Make the Connection to Agriculture

- What did we learn about the parts of the plant that we eat?  
*We eat seeds, roots, stems, leaves, fruit, and flowers, which are parts of different fruits and vegetables.*
- Were you surprised by some of the plant parts we eat? Why or why not?  
*Answers may vary depending upon the experiences students have with each of the plants listed. Many will probably be surprised at which part of the plant they actually eat.*

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- How are all of these plants connected to agriculture?  
*They are all a part of agriculture because farmers all grow these plants so that we can eat them. Some of these plants may be grown in our own gardens, too. It is important to know where our food comes from. The plants listed are grown in different places throughout the United States. In Nebraska, we may grow these in our gardens or greenhouses, but farmers do not grow them on a big scale. Most of Nebraska farmers are commercial farmers, meaning they grow commodities in large scale (sugar beets, corn, soybeans, wheat, etc.). Of the ones listed, Nebraska farmers produce corn, pinto beans, soybeans, and some wheat.*
- What can we share with others about what we learned?  
*It is important to know that much of our food comes from plants, and that we eat different parts of different plants. Farmers produce plants for animals and humans to eat. The fruits and vegetables we eat each day are seeds, roots, stems, leaves, fruits, and flowers.*

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**Edible Plant Parts**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place an "x" in the box under the part of the plant we eat.

Plant	Seed	Root	Stem	Leaf	Fruit	Flower
Apple						
Asparagus						
Beets						
Broccoli						
Cabbage						
Carrot						
Cauliflower						
Celery						
Cloves						
Corn						
Lettuce						
Olive						
Onion						
Orange						
Parsley						
Pinto Bean						
Potato						
Pumpkin						
Radish						
Rhubarb						
Rice						
Soybean						
Spinach						
Tomato						
Turnip						
Wheat						



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**Edible Plant Parts—ANSWER KEY**

<b>Plant</b>	<b>Seed</b>	<b>Root</b>	<b>Stem</b>	<b>Leaf</b>	<b>Fruit</b>	<b>Flower</b>
Apple					X	
Asparagus			X			
Beets		X				
Broccoli						X
Cabbage				X		
Carrot		X				
Cauliflower						X
Celery			X			
Cloves						X
Corn	X					
Lettuce				X		
Olive					X	
Onion			X			
Orange					X	
Parsley				X		
Pinto Bean	X					
Potato		X				
Pumpkin					X	
Radish		X				
Rhubarb			X			
Rice	X					
Soybean	X					
Spinach				X		
Tomato					X	
Turnip		X				
Wheat	X					