

Fourth Grade Garden Lesson Materials
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You can't get more local than eating from your/our own garden

Why is local good? Let's think of some great reasons (kids kick off the list + use this):

1. **Helps people in your area** – supporting local families and farms builds the strength of your community and your region
2. **Less food handling** – how many people/steps does it take to get grapes from South America to Evanston?
3. **Fewer pesticides/chemicals** to preserve freshness for long travel
4. **Less environmental damage and food contamination** due to travel
5. Fruit and vegetables can **ripen longer/better** – recently picked and fresher!
6. **Eat seasonally** and learn what grows during different months of the year – do apples really grow all year round??
7. **Get more variety** (not all food travels well, so only really resilient varieties can be grown in huge quantities and shipped around the world and when you grow in huge quantities you limit the variety of what you grow, which can impact soil quality and the whole environment)
8. **Preserves open space** – would you rather look at gardens or fill every green area with a building? Plants are essential for human and environmental health. And the health of that space – you need good soil and clean water to produce great food. Parking lots don't provide that.
9. **Supports the future of your area** – healthy farms help ensure strong local food sources for the future. What would happen if we were completely dependent on another country for our food?
10. **It tastes better!** (recently harvested, allowed to ripen “on the vine” and more flavorful)
11. **More nutritious?** It depends. Food nutrition levels are influenced by many things: type of food, how it was grown, whether or not it was allowed to ripen naturally, what chemicals were used on it, how it was handled and/or processed, and how far it travelled to get to you. The decisions and practices of people have a direct impact on how nutritious your food is – the more you know about it, the more you can be sure. If you have your own garden or know the farm where your food is from, then you know how its growth and harvesting was handled!

Reminder: Go/Slow

Remember when we've talked in PE, in your classrooms and at TV Tuneout about food that fuels you, or Go food? Who can tell me what Go food is? And do you remember about slow food? Who can share an example of a slow food?

Energizing foods are often called 'go' foods, because they fuel your body with energy (they make your body GO)! Foods weak in nutrients are often called 'slow' foods,

because they will slow your body down. They don't provide lasting energy. We all need to focus on Go foods and limit the amount of sleepy slow-you-down foods we eat.

Today we're talking about food from the Dewey garden. Would this be Go food or slow food?

Reminder on MyPlate & Intro to Fruits & Veggies

Remember in third grade when we were in your classroom on the very day that President Obama made a big announcement about the food groups and said that the Food Pyramid was going to be replaced? Could someone raise their hand and tell me what the food pyramid was replaced with? That's right – we all drew our own MyPlate and got to take it home (show MyPlate). MyPlate is a great tool to remind us how much we need of each type of food. List/point to the 5 food groups.

Today we're talking about the fruit and vegetable portions of the Plate. We're often told they're important, but who can tell me WHY it is important to eat them? Right, they contain vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water, which are important in keeping our bodies healthy. The fruit and veg portions of MyPlate make up half of the whole plate, so they're really important. In terms of how much to eat you can think of $2 + 3 = 5$. Two fruits plus 3 veggies – Give Me Five every day!!

So, do you think it would be a good idea to only eat fruits and vegetables and nothing else? Why/why not? Right, variety is really important so that we give our bodies all the types of fuel it needs to stay healthy, strong, and able to do all the things we need to do. Eating a variety of food helps us stay healthy, grow strong, and perform at our best!

What's in our Dewey garden: strawberries, Swiss chard, lettuces of different varieties, radishes, basil, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes

Can you name some of the vitamins, minerals and nutrients in our garden?

- Vitamin A - helps your skin and hair stay healthy and promotes good vision. It especially helps us see at night, when it's dark.
- Vitamin C – helps prevent illness and helps your body heal when you get a cut or bruise
- Vitamin K – helps prevent anemia (too little iron in your blood) and stimulates brain development
- Iron – a mineral that helps keeps our blood healthy
- Calcium – a mineral needed to build strong bones and teeth
- Antioxidants – nutrients and enzymes believed to help prevent cancer, heart disease, brain disease and arthritis
- FIBER – a type of carbohydrate that assists with digestion and staying regular and helps prevent many diseases

Strawberry – From Western Europe and a member of the rose family, the strawberry protects your heart, increases good (HDL) cholesterol, lowers blood pressure, and helps prevent cancer. Packed with vitamins, fiber, and high levels of antioxidants, just one serving -- about 8 strawberries -- provides more vitamin C than an orange.

Radish – Originated in China. Vitamin C (plus calcium in the leaves) as well as cancer-fighting ingredients, helps with digestion, and especially with liver function.

Swiss chard (from the Mediterranean; beet family) is a great source of vitamins C, E, and K, carotenes, chlorophyll, and fiber. It also has several minerals (potassium, magnesium, **iron**, and manganese). Swiss chard is also a source of **protein, calcium**, and vitamins (B-complex) that help with metabolism, or the process our bodies use to convert food to fuel to balance and maintain life. Swiss chard is one of the most powerful anti-cancer foods due to its combination of traditional nutrients (phytochemicals, chlorophyll, other plant pigments, and soluble **fiber**). The vitamin K in chard helps prevent anemia, maintain bone health and stimulate brain development.

Lettuce - Not all lettuce is created equal! But...all lettuce originated in the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia. Ancient Greeks and Romans viewed it as both a food and a medicine. In China, it has long symbolized good luck. Christopher Columbus brought lettuce to America in his second sea voyage (1493). It contains fiber, calcium, vitamins A, B (including folic acid, which helps with heart health), C, K, iron. Vitamin C and beta-carotene work together to fight cholesterol. Romaine is the most nutrient dense lettuce – the darker the lettuce, the more good stuff it has. It has less nutritional value when cut and exposed to air.

Cucumber – a fruit with origins in India! Part of the melon family AND the fourth most widely grown vegetable in the world (after tomato, onion, and cabbage). Its phytonutrients promote heart and joint health, and help with cancer prevention.

Zucchini – a summer squash (also part of the melon family) originally from Central America and Mexico. Rich in folate, potassium, vitamin A, C, B, and antioxidants. Native Americans considered zucchini as one of the “three sisters”, which also include corn and beans.

Tomato – From South America. Another fruit rich in anti-oxidants (especially lycopene) and a member of the nightshade family. Helps fight against development of cancer. Also helps with the circulatory system – working against heart disease and high cholesterol – and eye health. A great source of vitamins A and C.

Basil – An herb (any plant used for flavoring, scenting, or medicinal benefit) that originated in Iran, India, and other parts of Asia. It's one of the oldest known herbs and grows in many types; the most common is sweet basil (but have you heard of cinnamon basil? Lemon?). It contains many nutrients and its essential oils are especially good in fighting joint inflammation and bacteria. Vitamins A (vision) and K (blood) are strong in basil, as is iron (blood).

So what are some ways that you enjoy eating fruits and veggies? Kids start list:

- In lunch
- As part of a snack
- Together with other foods you love
- Remember when we made smoothies last year?...