

Lesson #1 Just Tastes So Local

Overview:

Students will learn what vegetables are found in a typical Connecticut garden and how to prepare to begin one of their own.

Objectives:

This lesson is designed for students to gather a recognizable connection between the food they eat and the way it is grown. Students will gain basic knowledge of the nutritional value of the vegetables harvested locally.

Key Concepts: Food Pyramid, Organic Gardening, Vegetable recognition, Food miles
Subjects: Social Studies, Biology, Ecology, Geography, Botany, etc.
Duration: 1 class periods (40 minutes)
Setting: In the classroom
Season: Spring
Interdisciplinary Connections



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Introduction (background):

Most people get their vegetables from their local grocery store. However, a growing number of people choose to plant their own, working the soil for many weeks in order to eat food that they are more familiar with. These people are gardeners and over the next few weeks you will learn how to build, plant, water, cultivate, and harvest food from your own garden.

Materials:

Hand outs that show various garden sizes and typical local vegetables grown.

Access to computer lab for in class research

2 tape measures

10 feet of string to see the footprint of different size gardens

Engagement-Opening or Essential Question:

Engage:

Ask class if they have ever gardened before?

Do they have a garden at home?

If so have they helped with that garden?

If not where do they get their vegetables from?

How do plants grow? What do they need?

What plants/vegetables did Native Americans typically grow? How about European settlers?

Exploration:

Explain:

- Show pictures of Cove River Site (or school ground area you plan to garden)
- Provide a brief history of the Cove River Site (or comparable garden plot area)
- Show students pictures of the vegetables they will be growing. Explain how some food is grown on large agricultural farms, on local family farms, and on private gardens.
- Inform students that they will be assigned a vegetable to research, plant, cultivate, and harvest.
- Show different types of private gardens from tiny windowsill planters to small backyard raised beds, to large community gardens.
- Explain food miles.
- Explain the difference between synthetic farming/gardening and composting
- Explain natural biotic pest controls that occur with high biodiversity and the necessity to synthetically provide protection on monoculture systems.

Elaborate:

- *Have students find two different examples of vegetable harvesting in Southern Connecticut.*

Evaluate:

Students should be able to recognize and identify the different methods used to grow vegetables. A gardening journal will be passed out to be kept during this unit. Prior to lesson one students will be asked the essential question and document their answers. After lesson one students will record how their perception of how vegetables are grown has changed; if at all.