

# HARVEST of the MONTH

Seasonal snacks from garden to classroom

## October 2017 – Zucchini

The CSG Educational Roots Framework (RootEd™) is grounded in our core values, and is intended to provide garden-based, experiential learning opportunities and leadership development that: cultivates gardening skills, promotes health, nurtures social & cultural development and enhances academic learning.

### Trivia Question and Zucchini Facts

 **QUESTION:** “This vegetable grows on a prickly vine with large leaves and big yellow, orange flowers. It’s fruit has green skin, and if left on the vine too long, it will grow to the size of a football. It’s name starts with a Z.”

 **FACTS:**

- In the United States, it is most common to eat the fruit of the zucchini plant, however, in other parts of the Americas, especially Mexico, the flowers are harvested to eat. The blooms may be stuffed with cheese and fried or baked, cooked into pasta sauce, or added to a quesadilla or soup.
- Zucchini’s ancestors trace back to Mexico in 7,000-5,500 BCE. When Europeans colonized the Americas, they took many native plants back to Europe to cultivate and breed. The zucchini we find in stores today was developed in Italy and only gained popularity in the US roughly 50 years ago.

### Garden Lessons and Activities

 **How Big Can Zucchini Get? – Math 2.11, 2.17**

**Background:** In August of 2014, Giovanni Batista Scozzafava set the Guinness Book of World Record for longest zucchini, with a fruit measuring 8 feet 3.3 inches. He reportedly did not use fertilizer or manure and simply gave his plant plenty of water. The heaviest zucchini on record was grown by Bernard Lavery of Llanharry of the UK in 1990 and weighed a shocking 64 pounds 8 ounces.

**Lesson:** Have students go out to the garden with measuring tapes, a portable scale, a large group data sheet, and large graphing sheet. In the garden, find a zucchini plant and circle around it to look for its fruit. Once you find a couple of fruits, share with students the Guinness Book of World Records facts provided above. Have the class measure out 8 feet to see how long that really is, and weigh a student to see if anyone is close to 64 pounds, allowing students to visualize what these incredible fruits looked like. Then, decide which fruit the class would like to “grow to the max!” The students will measure and weigh the fruit that day, recording their data on a group data sheet, and placing a data plot on their group graph. Every few days the students will go out for just 10 minutes to check on their fruit (which can be marked at the base with a twisty tie or string) and see how it’s grown. This study can be continued for 2-3 weeks to see just how large the zucchini will get. Each time students go out, they should feed the plant a bucket of water to help the zucchini grow.

 **Can I Eat That? – Science 1.4c**

**Background:** Though we are accustomed to eating just certain parts of a plant, many of our common vegetables have other parts that are edible. Examples include: carrot tops, sweet potato leaves, broccoli stems, beet tops, squash flowers, and pea shoots.

**Lesson:** Have students come out to the garden to classify plants and plant parts as edible vs. nonedible. Students can pull up and sort the plants and their parts into two piles or categories. Then students can suggest ideas for a different sorting system and can resort the plants into two new categories. Serve carrot top pesto or pea shoot salad for students to try eating a new plant part after.

 **Storybook Suggestion: *Carlos and the Squash Plant (Carlos y la Planta de Calabaza)* by Jan Romero**