

HARVEST *of the* MONTH

Seasonal snacks from garden to classroom

APRIL 2016 – Salad Turnips

CSG uses our **Educational Roots (RootEd)** frame to design lessons for our gardens.

The four core areas of RootEd are intended to enhance academic learning and include: cultivating gardening skills, providing experiential learning opportunities, promoting health and fitness, and nurturing social & cultural development.

Trivia Question and Salad Turnips Facts



QUESTION: “The root of this vegetable is perfectly round and perfectly white. It is the same size as a radish, and is a cousin of the radish as well. People eat the root raw on a salad or cooked in a pan.”



FACTS:

- Turnips contain a chemical called cyanoglucosides, which causes turnips to taste extremely bitter if you possess a specific gene in your DNA.
- Turnips are one of the oldest cultivated vegetables. However, salad turnips, also known as Japanese turnips or Hakurei turnips, are a newer variety developed in Japan in the 1950s after World War II.
- The leaves of salad turnips have a peppery flavor similar to mustards greens (in fact both are in the same plant family, Brassicaceae), and can be cooked and eaten similarly to other sauté greens.

Garden Lessons and Activities



Touch Identification – Science 1.1ac

Background: A plant’s leaf surface serves many functions. Hairy leaves (like the salad turnip) use their hairs to control their temperature by reflecting sunlight and reducing water loss to keep them cool and providing insulation to keep them warm. Spines and hairs also repel insects. Smooth leaves often prevent disease and fungal growth by reducing the number of surfaces to grow on.

Lesson: Before class, select 3-4 leaves off of 4-5 different plants in the garden that have distinctive textures and leaf surfaces. Hide the leaves in separate, numbered brown bags. Good leaves include: salad turnips (hairy), carrots (feathery), spinach (thick and crumpled), lettuce (thin and smooth), and sage (big and soft). When the students come out to the garden teach them how to carefully touch and feel the surface of a leaf without crushing it. Then have students reach into the numbered brown bags, and touch the leaf inside to feel the surface. Students should then go around the garden and touch the leaves of various different plants to try to identify the plant that the leaf in the bag came from.

Students should repeat the exercise for the other numbered brown bags.

Follow-Up: Have the students gather 20-40 leaves with different textures from the garden and return to the classroom. Use magnifying glasses to observe both the top and bottom surfaces of each leaf and to categorize them as smooth, hairy, crinkled, etc. Have students observe other similarities of the leaves in each category.



Planting Roots

Background: Salad turnips (or radishes if salad turnips aren’t available) grow early in the spring and are harvested 4-6 weeks later. This makes them an excellent plant to show students the seed-to-harvest lifecycle.

Activity: Have the students go to the garden to plant salad turnips. The students should prepare the soil and smooth the seedbed. Then draw 3-4 lines the length of the bed, spaced 2-3 inches apart for their seeds to go in (this method is easier with students than making individual holes for each seed). Demonstrate the importance of spacing the seeds the correct distance apart so they have room to grow, planting them the correct depth so they can make it to the surface without running out of energy, and keeping them moist so they can germinate and grow easily. In 4-6 weeks have the students return to harvest, wash, and enjoy!