

HARVEST *of the* MONTH

Seasonal snacks from garden to classroom

FEBRUARY 2015 – Baked Kale Chips

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 Kale Facts



QUESTION: “This food has more calcium per calorie than a glass of milk and more vitamin C than an orange. Even in freezing temperatures outside, it’s able to keep growing. It’s in the same plant family as broccoli, brussel sprouts, and collards.”



FACTS:

- Kale is one of the earliest known vegetables to be cultivated by humans.
- Kale is a cold-hardy vegetable that gets sweeter with cold temperatures. When covered with mulch or garden cloth, it can survive all winter long.
- Like many others in the Brassica family, kale is packed with antioxidants and is known as a “Superfood.”

Garden Activities



Leafy Greens:

- ▣ Show students three leaves of different shapes and sizes. Have students mimic each leaf shape with their bodies (i.e. arms up for long and narrow). Discuss the functions of leaves (energy absorption and storage, nutrient transport, etc.) and why different leaf shapes evolve for different plants (ex: long + narrow – minimize water loss). Have students go find their own examples of three different leaf shapes.
- ▣ Have students participate in a sensory scavenger hunt. Pass out three leaves of different shapes or with different edges and have students look for the plant they belong to in the garden. Each student should repeat the search with all three leaves. Then, repeat the exercise for touch and smell by hiding three leaves, each with a different texture/smell, in brown bags and having the students reach in the bag to feel/smell the leaf and then go find it in the garden by touching/smelling plant leaves in the garden. Note: rubbing/crushing leaves with your fingers will bring out the scent.
- ▣ Have students find a few dry, dead leaves in the garden and observe the difference in texture and structure of the leaf veins vs. the blade. Students can break off parts of the blade until just the skeleton of the veins is left. Discuss the different roles of each leaf part and how their function affects their form (veins are for transport, blade is for sunlight absorption). Dead leaves can be added to the compost to return their remaining nutrients to the soil.



Surviving Winter:

- ▣ Ask students to choose a spot to sit quietly for five minutes, pretending they’re a plant and observing the weather and climate (i.e. wind direction, temperature, sunlight). Then, ask them to describe what they observed and felt as a plant, and discuss plant adaptations and gardening strategies for winter survival (i.e. dormancy, nutrient storage, fall seed production, row cover).
- ▣ Invite students to find an example of a leaf that is still alive in the garden. Compare the size of these leaves to the size you find in the spring and summer. Explain that in winter, the largest leaves often die since they are most exposed to the wind and cold, while the smaller leaves that are closer to the warmth of the ground can survive to help the plant produce food again in the spring. Have the students look for other signs of life in the garden, such as dormant roots, plant stems, or seeds.