

HARVEST *of the* MONTH

Seasonal snacks from garden to classroom

STRAWBERRIES

— May, 2015 —



Harvest of the Month is a great way for youth and their families to explore, taste, and learn about seasonal vegetables and fruits - from the garden, in the classroom, on the plate.

FACTS & VARIETIES

Strawberries are bright red berries in the Rose or "Rosaceae" family. Their seeds can be found on the outside of the berry. As they grow, strawberries develop "runners," which are simply run-away stems that have developed roots.

Strawberries are normally propagated, or bred, not by seed but by uprooting the "runners" and replanting them. As a strawberry grows, it slowly drops behind the leaves of the plant to act as protection for the fruit- from sunshine and hungry birds and bugs that might spot it from above.

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Strawberries are ready to harvest when they easily pop off the stem. You probably know how sweet and juicy strawberries are. Did you know they are chalked full of:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E
- Manganese
- Potassium

One cup of strawberries contains over 100% of your recommended intake of Vitamin C! Vitamin C helps your body fight off infections and can help increase the absorption of iron from foods. Strawberries also contain tons of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds.

COOKING & EATING

Strawberries are delicious when eaten alone, but can also be a wonderful addition to many summer recipes! They can be blended up in smoothies, added to salads, or eaten with yogurt. Here's a recipe for a yummy salad:

STRAWBERRY & ARUGULA SALAD

- 1/2 cup sliced strawberries
- 1 cup arugula leaves
- 2 Tbs nuts, chopped
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1/2 Tbs balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp mustard

On top of the arugula, add sliced strawberries and chopped nuts. In a separate dish, combine olive oil, mustard, and vinegar. Add to salad and enjoy!

GROWING TIPS

In Central Virginia, strawberry season starts in May and ends in early June. Fields are planted in the fall with baby plants, which need to be "mulched" with a covering of hay in order to survive the cold Virginia winters. Once spring arrives and the weather warms, bees and other pollinators help get the strawberries ready for eating. Plants begin to flower, bees will pollinate, and then the center of each flower turns into a strawberry. There are many farms in our area where you can pick your own berries. Check out a list here. <http://www.buylocalvirginia.org>

CITYSCHOOLYARDGARDEN.ORG



Harvest of the Month is a program that highlights a locally available crop each month by providing a fresh, healthy snack in all six Charlottesville Elementary Schools. Students also learn about the crop in their schoolyard garden and classroom. Information on crop growing, nutrition, and preparation is shared with teachers and families. The goal of Harvest of the Month is to support healthy living skills that strengthen our youth and community.



City Schoolyard Garden is an independent non-profit organization that cultivates academic achievement, health, environmental stewardship, and community engagement through garden-based, experiential learning.