

Harvest of the Month



Farm to ECE

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

NEBRASKA



Download and print items from
the Harvest of the Month toolkit at:

www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE
4	ACTIVITY CALENDARS
6	ENGAGEMENT TOOLS
7	CARROT FUN FACTS
9	QUICK BITES
10	HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES
29	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Nemours Children's Healthy Kids, Healthy Future Technical Assistance Program is funded through a subaward agreement with the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists, the funding for which comes from the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO) in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award (cooperative agreement number 6 NU38PW000047-02) totaling \$2,775,000, which funds several ASPHN and Nemours Children's Health programs. This program is 100 percent funded by DNPAO/NCCDPHP/CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. government. For more information visit <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdpHP/divisions-offices/about-the-division-of-nutrition-physical-activity-and-obesity.html>.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

FLEXIBILITY – FOR YOU!

Use the provided activity calendars as a guide to incorporate this resource into your classroom. Follow the calendars as written, or use them as inspiration and select the activities that work best for you, the children, and your schedule.

TRY READING THE SAME BOOK EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK.

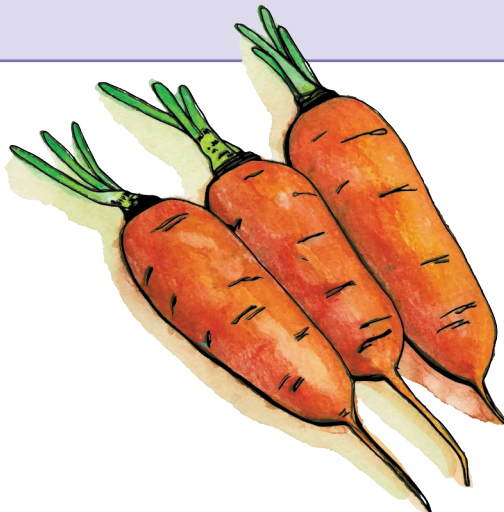
Reading the same book every day for a week allows children to learn more about the story and dive deeper into the book's meaning. Rereading a story leads to greater reading confidence. Ask discussion questions to encourage children to retell the story. This practice will help prepare children for more complex narratives down the road.

NO BOOK? TRY A READ-ALoud VIDEO!

Many books in the suggested reading lists have a read-aloud video published on the internet. If you don't have access to the physical books in your classroom or public library, check your library's digital catalog or search for a read-aloud video elsewhere online.

DON'T HESITATE TO REPEAT ACTIVITIES.

Repetition provides the practice that children need to learn and master new skills. As children repeat activities, they will improve speed, increase confidence, and strengthen the connections in their brain that help them learn!



ACTIVITY CALENDAR: PLANNING FOR ONE MONTH

WEEKLY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Student Understanding: Farmers grow carrots for people to eat. Book of the Week: <i>Right This Very Minute!</i> by Lisl H. Detlefsen and Renee Kurilla	Story Time with Book of the Week	Quick Bite One	Math Activity	Video: <i>Let's Get Raw! Kids Talk School Gardens & Salad Bars</i> Recipe: <i>Carrot Quinoa Muffins</i>	Story Time with Book of the Week
Student Understanding: Carrots start as seeds. Book of the Week: <i>If You Plant a Seed</i> by Kadir Nelson	Gross Motor Activity	Story Time with Book of the Week	Recipe: <i>Honey Garlic Butter Roasted Carrots</i> Video: <i>From Farm to You: Carrots</i>	Story Time with Book of the Week	Quick Bite Activity for Exploration
Student Understanding: Carrots grow underground and the part we eat is the root. Book of the Week: <i>Carrots Grow Underground</i> by Mari Schuh	Science Activity Video: <i>Edible Plant Parts</i>	Quick Bite Two	Story Time with Book of the Week	Music Activity Video: <i>If You're Happy and You Know It (Instrumental)</i>	Story Time with Book of the Week Carrots Coloring Page
Student Understanding: Carrots are a healthy food option that we can eat in many ways! Book of the Week: <i>Rabbit Food</i> by Suzanna Gretz	Story Time with Book of the Week	Video: <i>Harvest of the Month: Carrots</i>	Sensory Activity	Story Time with Book of the Week Video: <i>Hand Positions for Cutting</i>	Farm Story with Props

ACTIVITY CALENDAR: PLANNING FOR TWO WEEKS

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK ONE	Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading Gross Motor Activity	Quick Bite One Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading	Math Activity Recipe: Honey Garlic Butter Roasted Carrots Video: From Farm to You: Carrots	Video: Let's Get Raw! Kids Talk School Gardens & Salad Bars Recipe: Carrot Quinoa Muffins	Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading Quick Bite Activity for Exploration Carrots Coloring Page
WEEK TWO	Science Activity Video: Edible Plant Parts Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading	Quick Bite Two Video: Harvest of the Month: Carrots	Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading Sensory Activity	Music Activity Video: Hand Positions for Cutting	Story Time with Suggested Books Reading Farm Story with Props

RECIPE NOTE:

The recipes on the activity calendars are meant to spark ideas and give you a place to start. Programs such as Harvest of the Month offer additional options you can explore. Feel free to adapt or swap recipes to match your needs, resources, and schedule.

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR READING

- [*If You Plant a Seed*](#) by Kadir Nelson
- [*Right This Very Minute*](#) by Lisl H. Detlefsen and Renee Kurilla
- [*Tops and Bottoms*](#) by Janet Stevens
- [*Rabbit Food*](#) by Susanna Gretz
- [*Stone Soup*](#) by Jon J. Muth
- [*Too Many Carrots*](#) by Katy Hudson
- [*Carrots Grow Underground*](#) by Mari Schuh

SONGS, POEMS, AND VIDEOS

- Edible Plant Parts | FRESHFARM FoodPrints
» [youtube.com/watch?v=PLdAKJScMTY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLdAKJScMTY)
- From Farm to You: Carrots | LNKTv Health
» https://youtu.be/emz1az_ACrM?si=zXKRYkhcYIDssLPz
- Hand Positions for Cutting | FRESHFARM FoodPrints
» [youtube.com/watch?v=_EQz0p1MNil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EQz0p1MNil)
- Harvest of the Month: Carrots | LNKTv Health
» youtu.be/laJ6mKpfMQI?si=Vqc7vRjz0LvE_SwF
- If You're Happy and You Know It (Instrumental) | Music for Baby
» [youtube.com/watch?v=xt2RDchCwng](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt2RDchCwng)
- Let's Get Raw! Kids Talk School Gardens & Salad Bars | Whole Foods Market
» [youtube.com/watch?v=EPYqHnfZc3Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPYqHnfZc3Y)



INVOLVING FAMILIES

Involve families in the carrots unit by sharing the Carrot Fun Facts document. Add the information to a newsletter, incorporate the fun facts into a bulletin board, or send the sheet home so families can read through it and learn more together. Additional ways to involve families using the resources in this lesson could also include sharing the recipes and suggested books or inviting them to participate in one of the activities.

QUICK BITES

Harvest of the Month Quick Bites encourage children to participate in taste testing and provide activities for exploration. Children have the opportunity to learn more about the food on their plate and give feedback on food samples.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

These activities are aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for children ages 4-5. Use the lessons to engage children in hands-on activities to practice fine and gross motor skills, explore crafts and music, engage the senses, and more! All activities are “center” or “play station” based for small groups of children to complete at a time. Reference the Activity Calendars for scheduling inspiration.

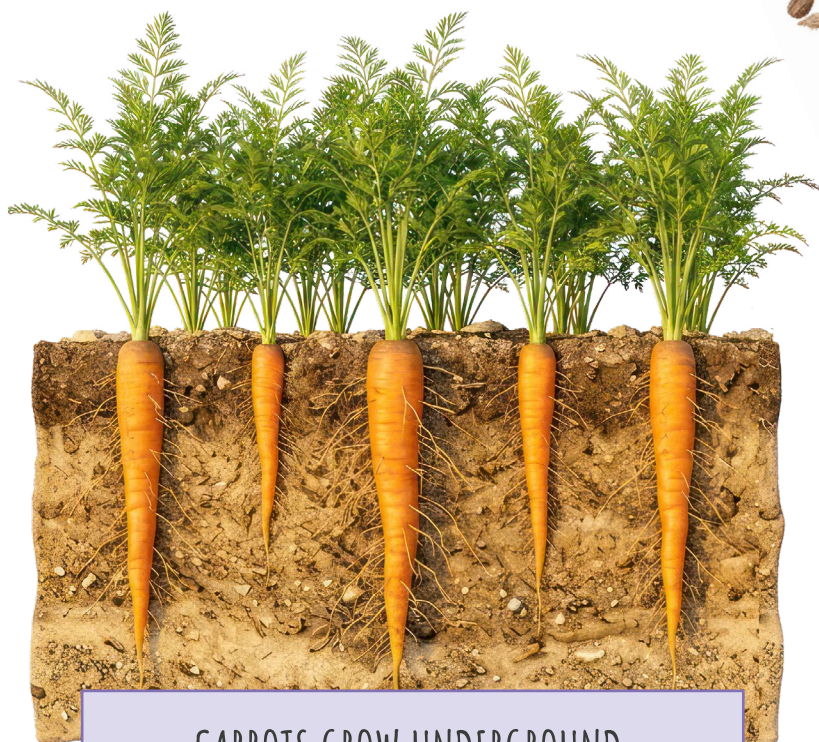
CARROT FUN FACTS

Children are learning about carrots! Extend learning outside of the classroom by creating a positive experience for children with a conversation about carrots. Help them learn more about new foods and farming in Nebraska!



EVERY CARROT STARTS AS A TINY SEED.

Carrot seeds are planted directly into the soil because moving the growing carrot plants can make the roots grow crooked.



CARROTS GROW UNDERGROUND.

The orange part of the carrot that we eat is called a root and grows below the soil, while its leafy green tops grow above the ground.



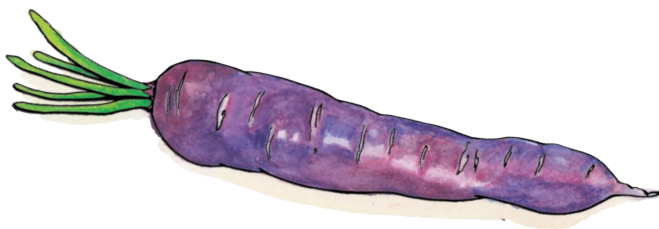
CARROTS COME IN MANY COLORS.

Orange carrots are the most common, but carrots can also be purple, yellow, red, white, and black.



CARROTS GROW BEST IN LOOSE SOIL AND SUNNY WEATHER.

Loose, rock-free soil gives carrots room to grow long and straight. Sunshine and water help carrots grow strong.



CARROTS CAN BE ENJOYED IN MANY WAYS.

Try carrots raw with dip, roasted, steamed, in soups, salads, stir-fries, or even baked to make carrot cake.



CARROTS ARE PACKED WITH VITAMIN A.

Vitamin A helps support healthy vision, healthy skin, and a strong immune system.

QUICK BITES

Did you know? Children may need to try a new food 10-15 times before they determine whether or not they enjoy it. Taste tests are a great opportunity for children to try new, healthy foods in a low-risk setting. Refer to the Taste Test Guide for food allergy information, precautions, and safety ideas before completing these activities with children.

QUICK BITE ONE

Purchase a few different varieties of carrots for your class to sample. Example: Purchase different types of raw carrots - uncut raw carrots with tops, baby cut carrots, julienne cut carrots, rainbow carrots, ripple-cut carrots, etc.

QUICK BITE TWO

Explore your five senses with carrots!

- Example: Roast carrots in the oven to soften their texture. Preheat oven to 425°F. Lightly grease a large baking sheet with nonstick cooking oil spray. Place carrots in a bowl with melted butter or olive oil, tossing to evenly coat. Place carrots on the baking sheet in a single layer. Roast for 20 minutes, or until carrots are fork-tender. If desired, broil on high for 2-3 minutes to crisp.
- Put the carrots on your plate and mirror eating it. Talk about your experience or describe what it tastes like when you eat it. Explore with your five senses.
 - » What shape are they?
 - » What does the texture feel like on each side?
 - » What do carrots smell like?
 - » When you chew, does the sound you make sound like another food you eat?
 - » How do carrots taste to you?

ACTIVITY FOR EXPLORATION

Create a classroom version of “Stone Soup!” There are various versions of this favorite tale of a selfish community who is tricked into creating a delicious soup from stones.

Materials:

- Three smooth stones (washed)
- Slow cooker
- Water, carrots, onions, potatoes, white beans, spices
- Servingware for tasting

Begin by reading a version of the book *Stone Soup* (there are a few). A read-aloud video of *Stone Soup* by Jon J. Muth can be found here: youtube.com/watch?v=Er5Y7Taxn8M

1. Ask the children questions from the book. What would stone soup taste like without any vegetables? Was it fair or unfair of the soup-maker to trick the people of the village into adding their vegetables?
2. Announce to the children that we will make stone soup in class!
 - » Invite children to use food-safe practices for washing vegetables.
 - » If available and desired, use child-safe cutlery to cut vegetables into smaller pieces.
3. Assemble the soup in the slow cooker while re-reading or retelling the story.
 - » Beginning with stones and water, add the other vegetables and seasonings.
4. Place the slow cooker on a low or high setting, vegetables will cook in around 3 hours on high or around 5-6 hours on low.
 - » Keep the hot cooker out of reach of children, but feel free to safely invite them to observe changes at supervised times during the hours it is cooking!
5. Serve the soup, ensuring plenty of time for cooling before children taste it.
 - » To recreate the celebration from the book, consider dimming overhead lights and turning on lamps to recall the evening lanterns! Serve with a favorite dessert if desired, especially one made with carrots for this month!

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

PAGE 11

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITY - PROTECT THE CARROT PATCH!

This activity helps children explore how farmers protect carrot crops from weeds, insects, animals, and other pests that can interfere with healthy plant growth. Taking turns as the carrot patch crew and garden pests, children throw, catch, dodge, and move through the play space, strengthening large-muscle coordination, balance, spatial awareness, and teamwork through active play.

PAGE 13

DATA ANALYSIS ACTIVITY - WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CARROT? CLASS GRAPH

Children will gather and graph data about group preferences, helping them interpret information in a visual format. Throughout the activity, teachers model thinking aloud to encourage children's problem-solving and awareness of their own thinking as they explore different carrot varieties and ways we eat them.

PAGE 16

SENSORY ACTIVITY - "BOIL" SOUP FOR BUNNY

Children will explore food scraps through imaginative sensory play while investigating how different plant materials look, feel, smell, and change when mixed together. As they create pretend soup for a rabbit, children build curiosity about the vegetables farmers grow for both people and animals.

PAGE 18

SCIENCE ACTIVITY - WHICH PLANT PARTS DO WE EAT?

Children will explore how different parts of plants provide the foods people eat while building an understanding of plant structures and agricultural concepts. Through observation, discussion, and classification, children will practice scientific thinking by making connections between plants, crops, and the foods they see in their everyday lives.

PAGE 22

MUSIC ACTIVITY - "IF YOU LIKE TO EAT THE ROOTS" SONG

Children will sing, move, and learn lyrics about various plant parts. They will practice listening, following patterns, using new vocabulary, and making connections between plants, farms, and the foods they eat.

PAGE 25

FARM STORY WITH PROPS

Read the story and have children follow along with the photos. Use the circle time activity props to enhance the experience!

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITY

PROTECT THE CARROT PATCH!

Standard (HP.02): Child demonstrates effective and efficient use of large muscles for movement, position, and to explore the environment.

Developmentally appropriate large-muscle games help children develop stamina, endurance, control, balance, and coordination of body movements. These are also a fun way children get to experience spatial awareness - an understanding of where objects are in relation to one another and to their own bodies as they bend, jump, throw, and play.

THE GOAL

This activity helps children explore how farmers protect carrot crops from weeds, insects, animals, and other pests that can interfere with healthy plant growth. Taking turns as the carrot patch crew and garden pests, children throw, catch, dodge, and move through the play space, strengthening large-muscle coordination, balance, spatial awareness, and teamwork through active play.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented with a large center of 6-8+ children. Books that compliment this activity include:

- *If You Plant a Seed* by Kadir Nelson ([youtube.com/watch?v=eDgIA3P8QMs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDgIA3P8QMs)) depicts a food fight scene with animals who all enjoy the garden produce!
- *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner and Christopher Silas Neal ([youtube.com/watch?v=_sDxBRbHdJQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sDxBRbHdJQ)) introduces us to many other organisms that share space in our gardens!

Divide children into two groups: the carrot patch crew and the garden pests. To prepare the play area, stand gym mats on end to create an enclosure becoming the carrot patch. If gym mats are not available, place baskets, bins, and buckets in a circle big enough for a couple of children to stand inside the circle. You can make the area as big or small as you like or need; it may be a good idea to have more than one set up with a larger group so you have maximum participation.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Gym mats if available
 - » Alternatively, various bins or baskets
- Various balls, such as soft foam balls, yarn balls, or even stuffed animals or shapes
 - » Bean bags or beanie toys are not recommended for safety reasons
- *Optional:* an internet search to show images of carrots and carrot pests

1. Introduce the activity telling children that the carrot patch is growing, but there are some weather, plant, and animal invaders that can slow down growth of the carrots. We'll take turns being the carrot patch crew doing the work of farmers and field workers to keep out pests, while the rest of us will toss pests back toward the field.
 - » Ask the children if anyone can name something that might be a pest in the carrot patch? Weeds, rocks, fungus and bacteria, flood water, hungry bugs like aphids, hungry animals like rabbits, deer, or gophers.
 - » For a commercial carrot patch, farmers work to keep out anything that hurts the plant parts, makes the plant sick, or uses up its water or nutrients in the soil.
2. Choose one or two students to go inside the carrot patch. The job of the carrot patch crew is to keep the garden pest foam balls out as best they can for the duration of the game.
 - » The rest of the children will be the garden pests! Spread this group out so they surround the outside of the carrot patch.
 - » Scatter the balls all over the outside of the patch or give each student on the outside 2-3 balls to start.
3. Set out safety guidelines:
 - » Remind children that the game will be stopped if they are fighting over balls to pick up.
 - » Caution students to be careful going to pick up a ball so heads don't collide. Please demonstrate this so they understand how to watch out!
4. Give the groups the okay to start tossing!
 - » The children inside the carrot patch continuously throw the "pests" outside the enclosure in any direction they want.
 - » Meanwhile, the outside group try to catch the pests to throw them back in.
5. Rotate the students in and out of the enclosure every few minutes. You may want to set a timer for even turn-taking.

Variations and adaptations:

- Have students in the crab walk or bear walk position to increase the physical challenge.
- Children with physical limitations can sit on the floor for the activity. You may need to make the enclosure larger to accommodate plenty of space for inside the carrot patch!

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop spatial awareness, socialization, gross motor, and teamwork skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What are some weather events that could make it difficult for carrots to grow? (drought or too little water, flooding or too much water)
 - » What might walk or fly into a field that might try to eat carrots? (animals like deer, rabbits, gophers, or voles or insects like aphids)
 - » Who works to keep plants safe from things that might hurt them? (farmers, field workers)

DATA ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE
CARROT? CLASS GRAPH

Standard (AL.02): Demonstrates active inquiry, persistence, problem identification, and application of knowledge to new situations.

Standard (M.04): Develops foundational skills in learning to understand concepts of classification, data collection, organization, and description.

Children make sense of their world by sorting, grouping, and organizing information in meaningful ways. Through collecting and describing data, children build early reasoning skills using materials to support planning, reflection, and development of thought processes (writing materials, graph paper, charts).

THE GOAL

Children will gather and graph data about group preferences, helping them interpret information in a visual format. Throughout the activity, teachers model thinking aloud to encourage children's problem-solving and awareness of their own thinking as they explore different carrot varieties and ways we eat them.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented in a medium-sized center of 4-6 children. *Rabbit Food* by Susanna Gretz would be a fun book to accompany this activity; it is about rabbit characters' reluctance to try certain vegetables ([youtube.com/watch?v=c14ejw3qZnk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c14ejw3qZnk)).

1. Introduce the activity by explaining that the class will collect information about everyone's favorite carrot variety and create a graph to show the results.
 - » Give ample wait time after asking open-ended questions so children have time to process and respond.
 - » Model thinking aloud throughout the activity by describing what you notice, wonder, or are doing. For example, "I wonder which column is getting taller?"
2. Display several carrot varieties (real carrots, pictures, or color representations) and invite each child to choose a favorite.
 - » One at a time, have children place a name card, sticky note, or other marker in the column that matches their choice.
 - » Continue until every child has added a vote to the class graph.

Kyoto Red	Cosmic Purple	Parisian Market	Danvers	Red Cored Chantenay	Rainbow
					
					
					
					

MATERIALS NEEDED

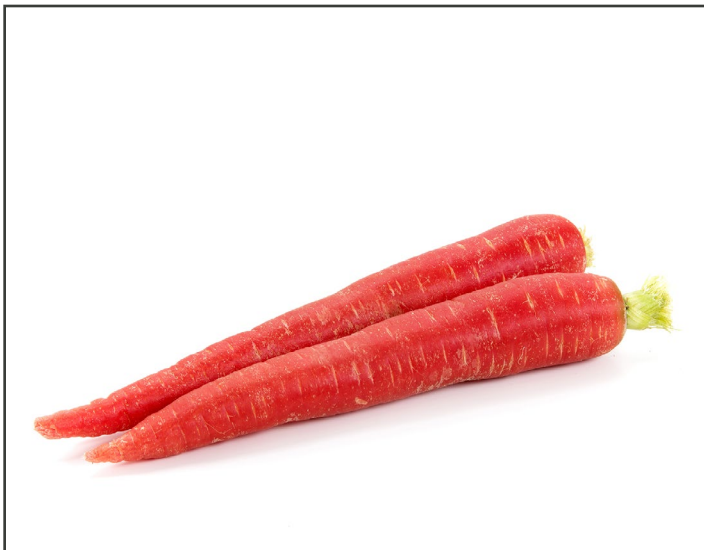
- Large chart paper or pocket chart
- Real samples of carrot varieties and colors or printed images
- Name cards or sticky notes for each child

3. Pause throughout the graphing process to observe and discuss what is happening.
 - » Model observations such as, “I notice the purple carrot column has two votes now,” or “The orange carrot column is getting taller.”
 - » Encourage children to share what they notice about the growing graph.
4. When the graph is complete, invite children to analyze the results together.
 - » Ask open-ended questions such as:
 - Which carrot variety has the most votes?
 - Which has the fewest votes?
 - Are any columns the same height?
 - What do you think would happen if another class made the same graph?
5. Extend the activity by inviting children to represent the data independently.
 - » Children can draw a simple version of the graph or use marks, stickers, or pictures to represent each vote.

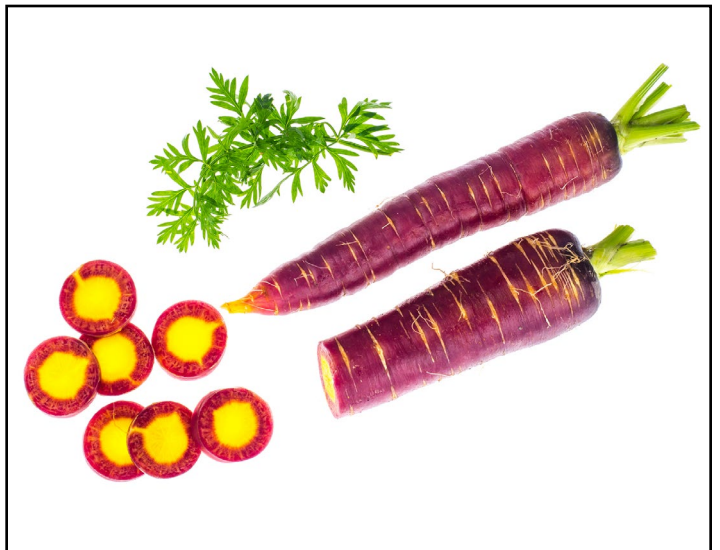
ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, early math, and critical thinking skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » Why might farmers want to know which kinds of carrots people like the most? (to sell more carrots that people prefer to eat)
 - » If a lot of people like one kind of carrot best, what do you think a farmer might decide to grow next season? (more of that carrot, enough for everyone)
 - » How do you think stores or farmers learn which carrots people want to buy and eat? (ask them, see what they buy)



Kyoto Red Carrot



Cosmic Purple Carrot



Parisian Market Carrot



Danvers Carrot



Red Cored Chantenay



Rainbow Carrots

SENSORY ACTIVITY

"BOIL" SOUP FOR BUNNY

Standard (AL.01): Develops foundational skills that support initiative, self-direction, and curiosity as a learner.

Standard (S.02): Develops foundational skills in learning and understanding about the world through exploration and investigation.

Sensory play encourages children to explore the world through hands-on investigation while strengthening fine-motor skills, language, social interaction, creativity, and self-direction. As children experiment with familiar materials, they build curiosity, confidence, and foundational scientific thinking through observation and exploration.

THE GOAL

Children will explore food scraps through imaginative sensory play while investigating how different plant materials look, feel, smell, and change when mixed together. As they create pretend soup for a rabbit, children build curiosity about the vegetables farmers grow for both people and animals.



MATERIALS NEEDED

For all versions:

- Food scraps from cooking: onion skins, corn husks, ends of carrots, zucchini, and cucumbers, broccoli stems, strawberry tops, etc.
- Vinegar
- Baking soda
- Towels or wash cloths for spills and clean-up

Additional outdoor kitchen or large sensory area version:

- Wooden spoons
- Small pots, pans, cups, or muffin tins

Additional miniature tabletop version:

- Toothpicks, tongs, or other small utensils
- Toy wheelbarrows or dump trucks
- Small containers, muffin tins, cups, or bowls

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented in a medium-sized center of 4-7 children and can be held as an outdoor sensory kitchen, a large indoor sensory bin experience, or a miniature tabletop activity. *Too Many Carrots* by Katy Hudson tells the story of a rabbit who has to find out what to do with the extra carrots they grew - share them with friends! (youtube.com/watch?v=POV5PQ2-h2o)

Adult supervision is recommended when using vinegar and baking soda. While these materials are non-toxic, children should be reminded not to taste sensory materials.

Preparation for outdoor kitchen or large indoor sensory area:

Set up the play area with containers, utensils, toys, and food scraps. Place baking soda and vinegar in child-friendly containers for children to access with adult support.

1. Introduce children to create a pretend meal for Bunny using food scraps from plants.
 - » Explain that rabbits eat many of the same foods people eat, such as carrots and leafy vegetables.
 - » Show children the food scraps and ask: What foods do you recognize? Which parts of the plant are we using? Do you think Bunny would like this soup?
2. Invite children to explore the food scraps and create pretend soup.
 - » Encourage children to scoop, mix, stir, and combine ingredients using the pots, pans, and spoons.
 - » Model descriptive language: "I hear the carrot pieces snap when I break them apart." "The broccoli stem is hard." "The vinegar and baking soda are making bubbles!"
3. Add baking soda and vinegar to encourage scientific exploration.
 - » Invite children to predict what might happen when the ingredients mix.
 - » Encourage children to observe changes such as fizzing, bubbling, sounds, and smells.
 - » Remind children that this is pretend soup and is not for eating.

Preparation for a miniature tabletop version:

Create a small-world farm scene where children can transport food scraps from a pretend field or garden to Bunny's kitchen.

1. Introduce the activity by connecting it to how food travels.
 - » Explain that before food reaches our kitchens, farmers grow and harvest crops to travel to places like markets and grocery stores.
 - » Invite children to help deliver food scrap ingredients to Bunny using toy vehicles, toothpicks, and tongs.
2. Encourage children to create Bunny's soup, mixing ingredients in small containers and adding small amounts of vinegar and baking soda to observe bubbling reactions.

Clean-Up:

- Separate food scraps from reusable materials.
- Discuss how food scraps can be returned to the earth through composting.
- Have children help return tools, toys, and materials to their places.
- Wash sensory tools and wipe down the play area, cleaning up any remaining spills if needed.
- Wash hands after sensory play.

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, pattern recognition, self-direction, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » Do rabbits in the wild eat boiled soup? (No, they eat plants from nature.)
 - » What can we do with food scraps after we cook? (Compost them to return nutrients to the soil and help plants grow.)
 - » Why do farmers grow vegetables like carrots and lettuce? (to feed people and animals)

SCIENCE ACTIVITY

WHICH PLANT PARTS DO WE EAT?

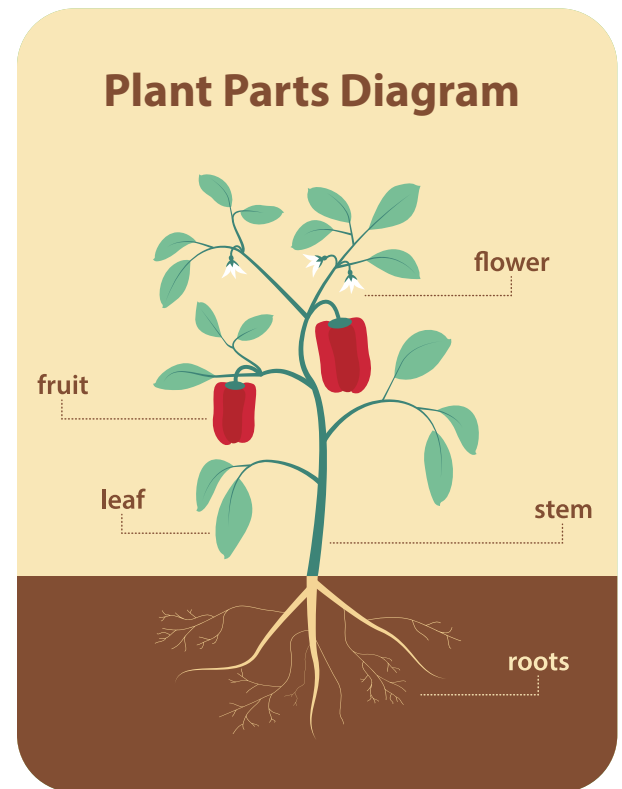
Standard (S.01): Demonstrates a basic awareness and use of scientific concepts.

Standard (AL.02): Demonstrates active inquiry, persistence, problem identification, and application of knowledge to new situations.

Children develop an understanding of basic scientific concepts by observing, identifying, and describing the natural world. Through curiosity, questioning, and exploration, children practice using information they discover to solve problems, make connections, and apply their knowledge in new situations.

THE GOAL

Children will explore how different parts of plants provide the foods people eat while building an understanding of plant structures and agricultural concepts. Through observation, discussion, and classification, children will practice scientific thinking by making connections between plants, crops, and the foods they see in their everyday lives.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens or a video of the book being read aloud at: youtube.com/watch?v=sm5nAcqWmJU
- Plant Parts Diagram

Optional extension for Plant Parts Oversized Class Poster activity:

- Individual pictures or props of foods to pass out (one per child)
 - » For digital users, follow hyperlinks to print Harvest of the Month coloring pages if you wish. Pages in additional languages can be found at: education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month
 - » Crops from the book: [carrots](#) (root), [radishes](#) (root), beets (root), [lettuce](#) (leaves), [broccoli](#) (flower), celery (stem), [corn](#) (fruit), popcorn (seed)
 - » Additional Nebraska crops if desired: [sweet potatoes](#) (root), [turnips](#) (root), [basil](#) (leaves), [cabbage](#) (leaves), [asparagus](#) (stem), [rhubarb](#) (stem), [cucumber](#) (fruit), [squash](#) (fruit), [tomatoes](#) (fruit), [dry beans](#) (seeds)
- 5' long piece of butcher paper or newsprint taped to a wall
- Marker
- Tape

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented as a medium-sized center with 3-6 children. This is an excellent activity to pair with reading *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens.

To prepare for the activity, print and display the included diagram of plant parts and the page of foods from the book. If available to you, gather toy foods from around your classroom or pictures of foods.

1. Begin the activity by warming up children's thinking about agriculture. Ask questions such as:
 - » Where do all of these foods come from?
 - » Where do they grow and who grows them?
2. Introduce the parts of a plant using the plant diagram.
 - » Review the different plant parts: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, seeds, and fruit.
 - » Encourage children to repeat the plant parts and use the diagram to notice where each part grows.
3. Discuss plant parts that Hare and his family harvest in the book, *Tops and Bottoms*:
 - » Bottoms in the book include: **roots** like carrots, radishes, beets
 - » Tops in the book include: **leaves** like lettuce, **flowers** like broccoli, and **stems** like celery
 - » The "middle" in the book is corn: Corn is the **fruit** of the plant because it grows from the flower of the plant and contains seeds (we call it a vegetable because we eat soft sweet corn when it's young), and when it's mature, corn is a **seed** like popcorn.

Optional extension for Plant Parts - Oversized Class Poster activity:

4. Distribute one food picture to each child.
 - » Explain that each food comes from a plant. Their job is to decide which plant part people eat.
 - » Give children time to compare the food pictures with the plant diagram and discuss their ideas.
5. Invite children one-by-one to share their food picture.
 - » Begin with asking children: "Do you have any questions about the pictures/toys you're holding? Can anyone tell us the name of this food?"
 - » Ask children to explain their thinking: "How can you tell which food this is? Which plant part do we eat?"
 - » Help children tape each picture to the correct section.

This activity was adapted from one available at:

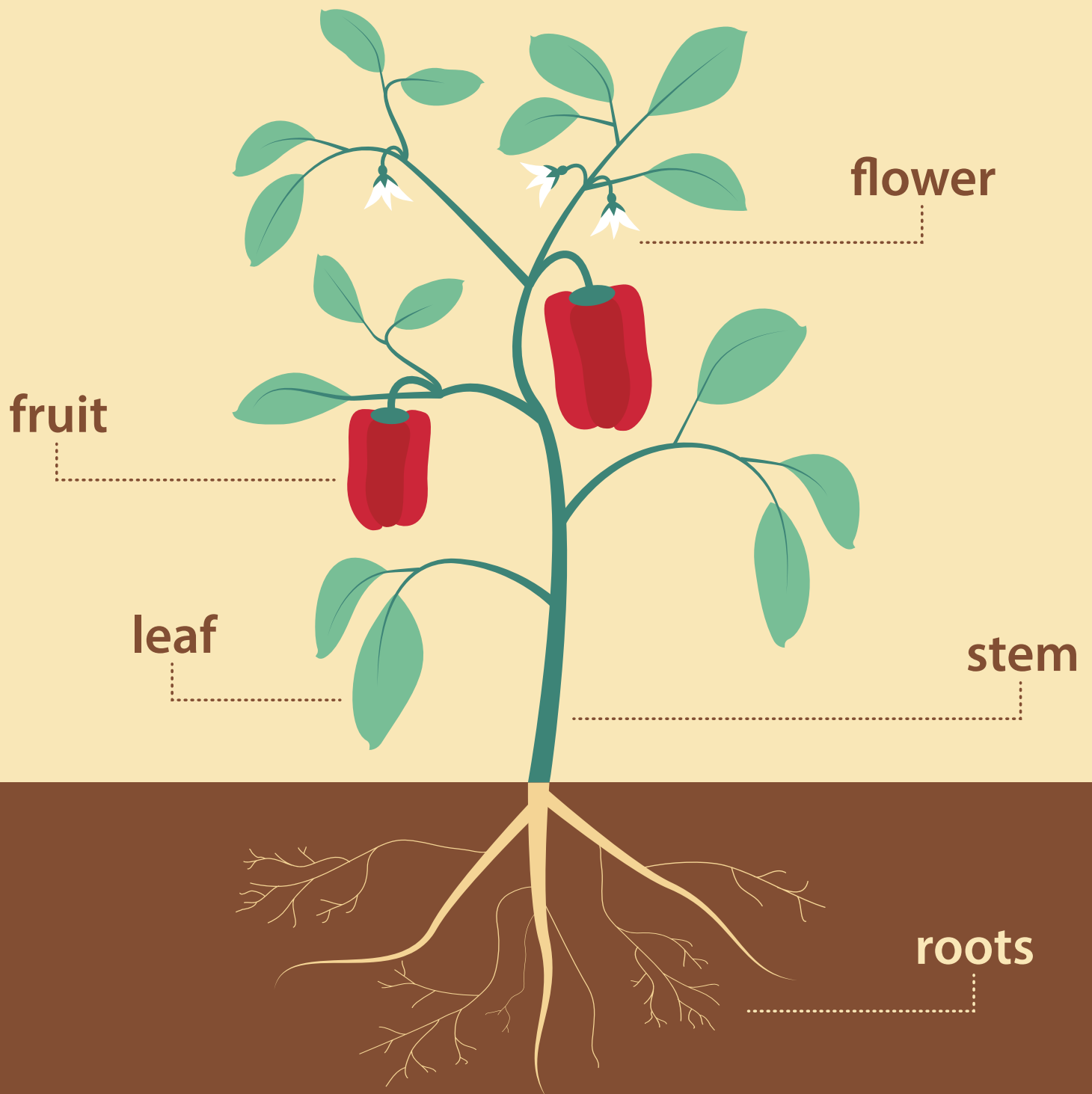
www.pnc.com/en/about-pnc/corporate-responsibility/grow-up-great/lesson-center/farm-to-preschool/plant-parts-we-eat.html

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, scientific inquiry, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What other foods come from plants? What plant part do we eat? (answers will vary)
 - » Do you think farmers grow plants for their roots, leaves, seeds, flowers, stems, or fruit? (all of them, depending on the plant!)

Plant Parts Diagram





Carrots



Radishes



Beets



Lettuce



Broccoli



Celery



Corn



Popcorn

MUSIC ACTIVITY

"IF YOU LIKE TO EAT THE ROOTS" SONG

Standard (CA.01): Develops foundational skills to support creative expression through voice, instruments, and objects.

Music enhances all areas of a child's development, equipping them with the tools to be ready for school. This includes intellectual, social, emotional, motor, language, and literacy all together. Music helps a child's mind and body work together. Music also helps children learn the sounds and meanings of words.

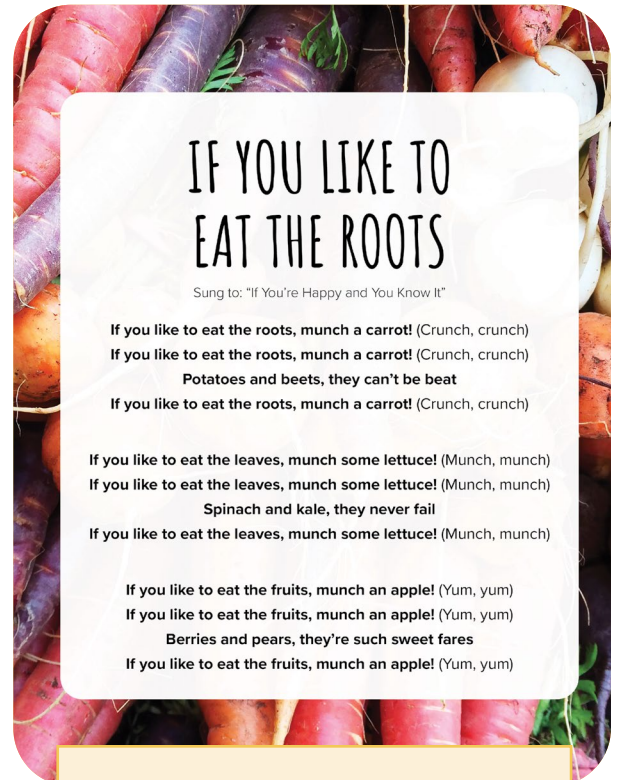
THE GOAL

Children will sing, move, and learn lyrics about various plant parts. They will practice listening, following patterns, using new vocabulary, and making connections between plants, farms, and the foods they eat.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity can be implemented as part of morning circle time or as a play station with 4-5 children. To connect the foods we eat to the growing seasons and activities of farmers, you may read *Right This Very Minute!* by Lisl H. Detlefsen and Renee Kurilla to accompany this activity. (youtube.com/watch?v=OF2V43qd4Yc)

1. Hang the song lyrics poster "If You Like to Eat the Roots" where children can see it.
 - » Referring to the words while singing builds print awareness, a pre-reading skill.
 - » Encourage children to notice letters, words they recognize, and the direction we read the words on the page.
2. Introduce the song, "If You Like to Eat the Roots" to tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It."
 - » See the lyrics poster for words. Be ready to repeat the song several times as children learn the lyrics, movements, and plant parts!
 - » If you'd like accompaniment, an instrumental version of "If You're Happy and You Know It" can be used, like this one on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=xt2RDchCwng. Consider slowing down the playback speed to 75% so children have time to learn the song at their own pace (click the settings icon and "Playback Speed").
 - » Incorporate print awareness and pre-reading practice:
 - Can a child point to the words as we sing?
 - Can anyone find a word they recognize?
 - Would anyone like to point to a word and guess what sound it begins with?



MATERIALS NEEDED

- "If You Like to Eat the Roots" song lyrics poster
- *Optional:* classroom musical instruments

3. Continue the song with additional verses and incorporate movements when children are ready.
 - » Invite children to act out the plant parts or foods in the song:
 - Pretend to pull a carrot from the ground, tear lettuce leaves, or pick an apple from a tree.

Freeze Dance Variation:

When children are familiar with the song and actions, add a freeze dance element by pausing the music at various intervals. When the music stops, children freeze like a plant in the garden on a calm day. Encourage children to hold their pose until the music begins again.

Classroom Instruments Variation:

Invite children to use classroom instruments (such as rhythm sticks, shakers, drums, bells, etc.) to accompany the song. Encourage children to choose sounds or rhythms that match each plant part - for example, a deep drum beat for roots, gentle shaking for leaves, or bright bell sounds for fruits. Children can practice keeping a steady beat while reinforcing the connection between plant parts, foods, and the sounds they create.

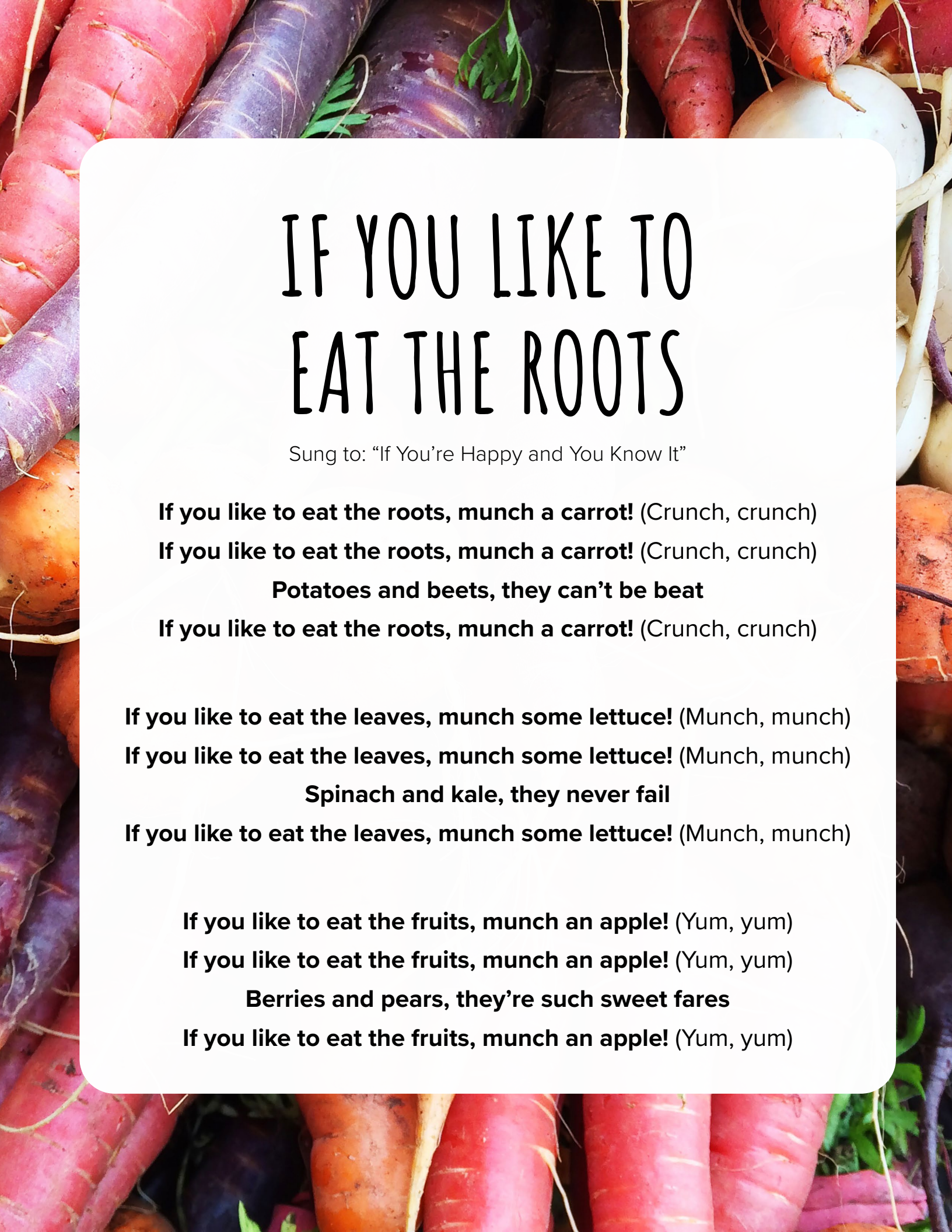
This activity was adapted from song lyrics found at:

preschooleducation.com/songs/25-fun-and-educational-songs-about-gardens-plants-and-seeds

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, motor, and sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What are some different plant parts that we eat? (flower, root, fruit, leaf, stem, seed)
 - » What other foods grow from roots? (sweet potatoes, onions) What other foods are leaves that we eat? (chard, microgreens) What other fruits grow on plants or trees? (apples, peaches)
 - » Are all plants outside safe to eat? (not all plants outside are safe to eat - ask a trusted grown-up)



IF YOU LIKE TO EAT THE ROOTS

Sung to: "If You're Happy and You Know It"

If you like to eat the roots, munch a carrot! (Crunch, crunch)

If you like to eat the roots, munch a carrot! (Crunch, crunch)

Potatoes and beets, they can't be beat

If you like to eat the roots, munch a carrot! (Crunch, crunch)

If you like to eat the leaves, munch some lettuce! (Munch, munch)

If you like to eat the leaves, munch some lettuce! (Munch, munch)

Spinach and kale, they never fail

If you like to eat the leaves, munch some lettuce! (Munch, munch)

If you like to eat the fruits, munch an apple! (Yum, yum)

If you like to eat the fruits, munch an apple! (Yum, yum)

Berries and pears, they're such sweet fares

If you like to eat the fruits, munch an apple! (Yum, yum)

TEACHER SCRIPT FOR FARM STORY WITH PROPS

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the story and have children follow along with the photos on the front of this page. Use the circle time activity props to enhance the experience.

- Every carrot begins as a tiny seed. Farmers plant carrot seeds in rows just below the surface of loose soil, giving the roots room to grow.
- Sunshine, water, warm temperatures, and healthy soil help the seed sprout. Soon, a small green sprout pushes through the soil toward the sunlight.
- As the plant grows, the leafy green tops collect sunlight while the carrot grows beneath the ground. The root is getting bigger each day, even though we cannot see it.
- The carrot continues to grow underground while its leaves help it make food for energy. As more nutrients are stored, the carrot becomes longer, thicker, and sweeter.
- Farmers check their carrot fields often. They water the plants when needed and remove weeds so the carrots have enough space, sunlight, water, and nutrients to grow.
- After several weeks of growing, the carrots are ready to harvest. Farmers carefully pull the carrots from the ground by their leafy tops or use special harvesting equipment.
- After harvest, the carrots are cleaned to remove dirt. They are sorted by size and quality before being packed into bags or boxes to be shipped to grocery stores, farmers markets, and schools. Families bring carrots home to enjoy fresh, cooked, or in tasty recipes. Carrots can be eaten in many ways, such as raw, roasted, steamed, added to soups, salads, stir-fries, and even baked into carrot cake.



CIRCLE TIME PROPS

Ahead of the activity, gather classroom items as props and/or cut and glue the included images to popsicle sticks. Distribute the props before you read the story and have children act out the story with the props. Practice sequencing: when children hear their item called, they would stand in order at the front of the room with the teacher.



FARM STORY

CARROTS

Learn more about how carrots start as seeds and grow to get to your hands!

1



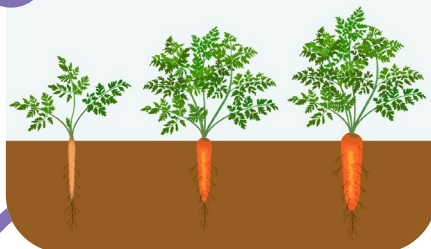
Farmers plant tiny carrot seeds into the soil. Sunshine, water, and warm temperatures help the seed sprout.

2



Green carrot leaves grow above the ground while the orange root grows below the soil.

3



The carrot root grows bigger as it stores nutrients from the leaves. Farmers water the carrot plants and remove weeds to help the new carrot plants grow.

4



When the carrots are ready to harvest, farmers gently pull them from the ground.

5

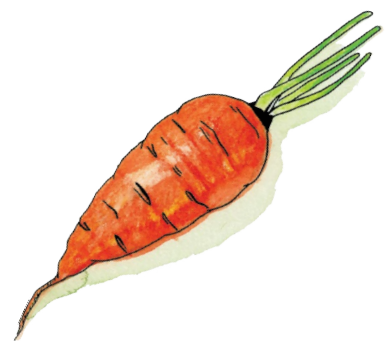


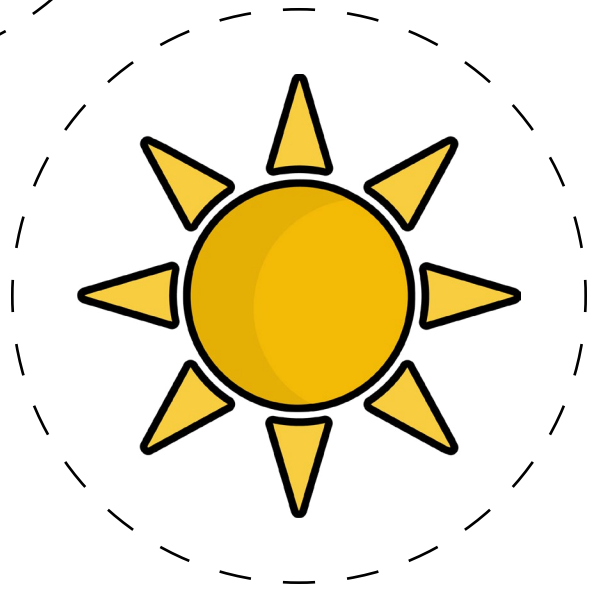
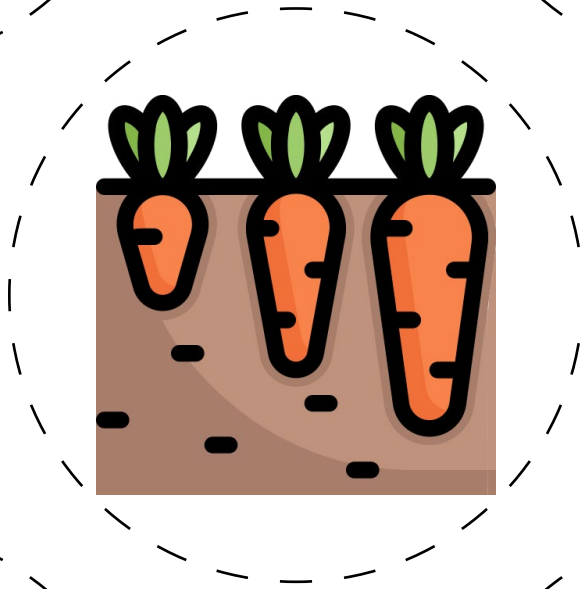
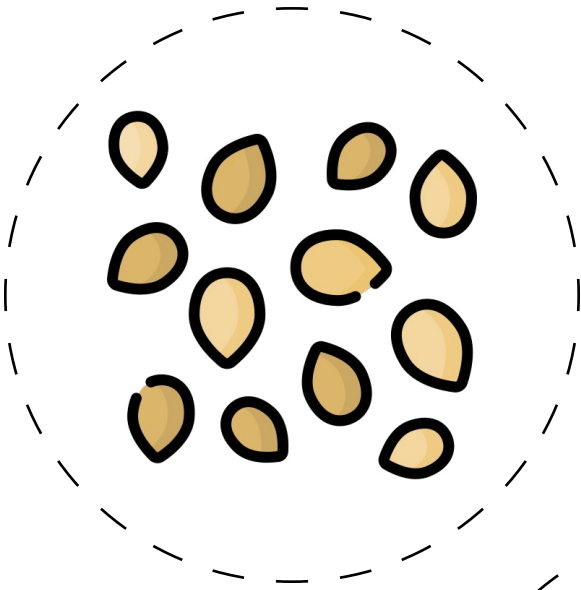
The carrots are washed, sorted, and packed to travel to grocery stores, farmers markets, and schools.

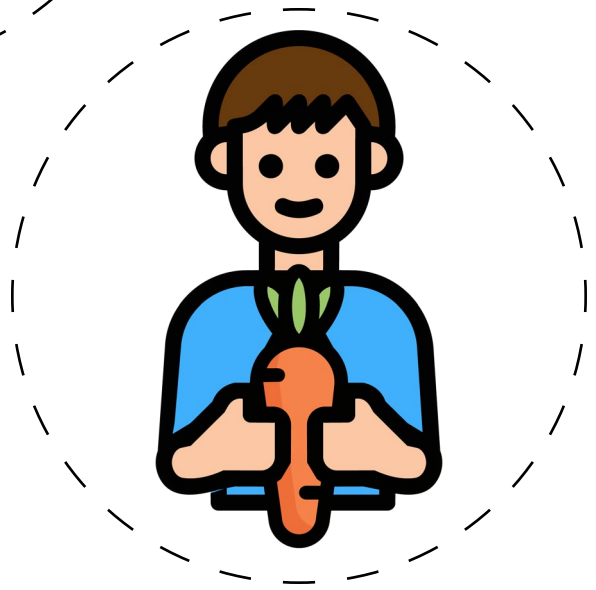
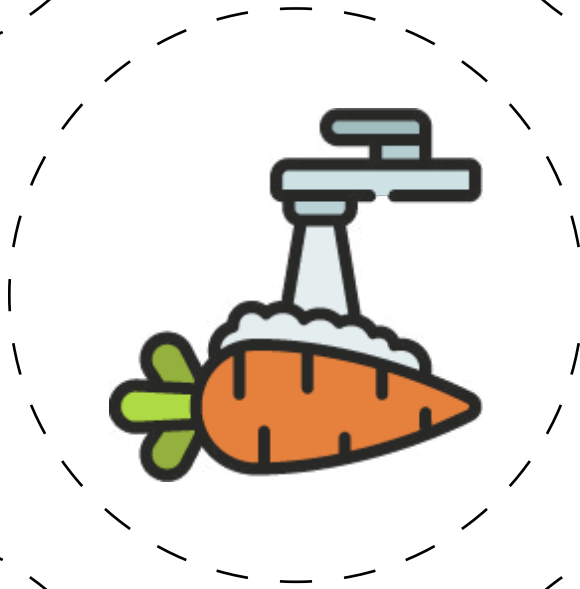
6



We enjoy eating carrots fresh, cooked, and in tasty recipes!

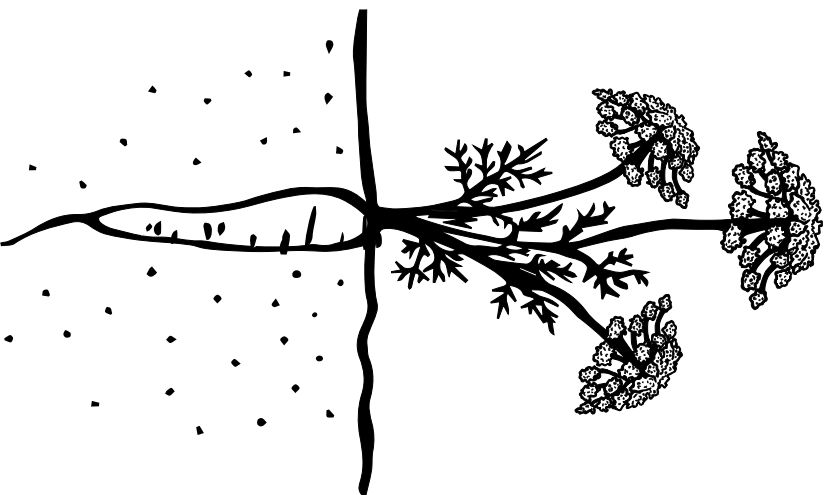






Harvest of the Month

CARROTS



DID YOU KNOW -

Carrots are cousins to parsley, dill, celery and cilantro! People originally kept carrots in the garden to harvest their leaves and seeds, however over time their roots became popular.



Farm to School
NEBRASKA



NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION