

3rd Grade – Salad Greens Planting and benefits of eating a diversity

Third Grade Salad Greens Lesson Plan

Date: March anytime

Objective: To teach students about the variety of greens that are available to eat and why it is important to have diversity in our garden and diets.

Background: Not long ago, a typical salad was made primarily of iceberg lettuce and it was difficult to find other greens to add to the salad. Now you don't have to look far to find mixed greens and heads of red or curly leafed lettuce as well as a variety of kale, swiss chard or collards. This is an improvement for our health because the nutritional value of these mixed greens outweighs that of iceberg's.

Generally speaking when comparing leafy greens, the darker the leaf, the more nutrition it provides. And eating a diversity of colors is important for good health because different colors in our food provide different nutrients as do different parts of the plant.

Leafy greens are particularly full of Vitamin A (for good skin and eyes), vitamin K and iron (for strong blood) and vitamin C (to help fight infection). And they are easy to grow in cool spring weather!

Preparation:

- Gather pictures and descriptions of at least 7 different salad greens (ex: spinach, red and green leaf lettuce, tatsoi, mizuna, arugula, chard, and kale) Descriptions include interesting facts about each type of green. Alternatively, bring several seed catalogs, for students to research information about a specific green on their own.
- Gather paper and pencils for students to write their researched information
- Gather pictures of salads with just iceberg lettuce and pictures of salads made with a variety of different greens;
- Prepare the garden for planting by pulling weeds, turning the soil and creating furrows (optional). Mark the area to be planted.
- Gather a variety of greens seeds to plant; popsicle sticks and sharpie to label what was planted where; watering can w/ water, or small rain makers (plastic containers with holes in the bottom)

Action:

Whole class discussion – 10 minutes

1. Introduce yourself and describe generally what you will be doing.
2. Show students the salad made with just iceberg lettuce and ask how many have had a salad like that before. Then show the salad made with a wider variety of greens and ask how many have had a salad like that before. What is the main difference you notice between these two salad types? While iceberg salad is fine to eat, it is important to know that the darker the leaves, the more nutrients it has. Why do we want to eat salad with so many different kinds of greens? Explain that each item in the salad has a different mixture of nutrients – vitamins and minerals.

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The wider variety of things we eat, the more nutrients we are getting for our bodies. Also we are getting a more varied taste as each of the greens has a little different flavor. Planting a diversity of greens is good for our garden and eating diversity of greens is good for our bodies.

3. Explain to students that they will have an opportunity to plant a variety of greens in the garden today and then before the end of the school year we will get to have a salad tasting party.
4. Show the students the cards or catalogs with different greens on them. Explain to the group that each table of 3-4 students will get to read about one of the greens we will be planting and share 3-4 interesting facts (traits) about that vegetable with the class. Divide the class in half.

½ class planting and writing the presentation – 15 minutes each

5. Have ½ of the students stay in the room and prepare their presentation while the other half goes to the garden to plant. Then switch groups. Each time should take about 15 minutes
6. Explain the process of planting to the students. Seeds should be planted at a depth 2x the size of the seed. How large are these seeds (tiny)? How deep should they be planted? Should we dig lots of small holes or dig a furrow?
7. Show students how to dig a furrow and have 3 students each dig one furrow to the correct depth depending on the seeds to be planted. These will be very shallow (or pre-prepare the furrows)
8. Show students how to plant the seeds by spreading them out in the furrow - why don't we drop them all in one clump?
9. Give each student about 10 seeds of the green they choose and have one student at a time plant if possible.
10. Discuss with students why it is important to eat a variety of colors and plant parts – they all contain different nutrients that our bodies need.
11. There may be volunteer greens in the garden. As the groups go to the garden to plant, they may be able to taste different greens (tatsoi, mizuna, red mustard, red leaf, arugula and romaine may all be growing voluntarily. Take time to talk about what a volunteer plant is and how they may have spread throughout the garden. If the students had already prepared their presentation, try to find a volunteer of what they had studied about to let them taste.
12. After all students have had the chance to plant and prepare their presentations, the presentations can be given. The students should show the picture of what they have studied while they are giving the facts about the item.

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