

UC Marin Master Gardeners

Dig it, Grow it, Eat it Program Description

Station One: Edible Plant Parts

Location: The Herb Garden and Demo Tent

Children wash their hands as they come into this area because they will harvest and taste. They get divided into 6 groups of five and each child in the group gets a sign to wear around their neck as does one adult with the group: Roots, Stems, Leaves, Flowers, Fruits, Seeds. Each group is directed to a newspaper sheet where there is a sharpie, hand lens, food grinder, plastic knife and four paper bowls.

Teach page 9 of curriculum handout as follows:

Roots: Have carrots planted in a pot to illustrate a root we eat. The “root” child from each group comes up and picks 2 carrots and rinses them in wash bucket. They go back to their group to put a carrot on the newspaper and grind the second one up. Pass salad bowl around to taste.

Stems: Harvest rhubarb stem. Point out not all parts of a plant are edible (the poisonous leaf contains the chemical alkaline solanine.) The “Stem” child from each group takes slices of stem back to newspaper and their group. (six thin slices and a large piece of stem) The group does a “one bite lesson” – is it sweet or tart?

Leaves – The “Leaf” child harvests any of the herbs and sorrel – and collect for lunch (herbed corn bread). “Leaf” child takes 7 sorrel leaves and several herb stems back to their group where children remove leaves from stem, throw into herb bowl for cornbread. They must also reserve a piece of herb leaves for their newspaper pile and they get to taste the sorrel leaf – again a “one bite lesson”. How do they describe the taste? (I think it’s lemony ...) Put the last sorrel leaf into the salad bowl.

Flowers –Each “flower” child from groups picks two pineapple sage blossoms – one for the dessert bowl and one for newspaper pile for their group. Use loup (hand lens) to look at petals, stamen, pistil and sepals. MMGs have some from Farm Day. Have a poster of flower parts.

Fruits – Have a pot of strawberries to illustrate a fruit we eat. Each “fruit” child picks two strawberries, washes and brings back to their group. One strawberry goes on the newspaper pile and the second gets put into a bowl and cut up into 6 slices – one for each child to do the “one bite lesson”. Is the fruit tart or sweet? Remaining slice of strawberry goes into dessert bowl.

Seeds – Gather chive blossom and coriander blossom (which we have to plant) that have gone to seed. “Seed” child goes back to their group with two seed heads (chive and coriander which of course is cilantro before it goes to seed) and passes seed heads around so each child gets to collect seed. Place in bowl for Stew for lunch. Place seed head on newspaper pile. And again, do the taste test (one bite lesson with each seed asking children to observe the difference in seed color and size. Ask them what other herb seeds we eat?

Students identify plant parts on newspaper by name – Root, Stem Leaf, Flower, Fruit or Seed, drawing six circles and naming parts. When groups are finished, group talks about page 14 from curriculum