



Adding a Youth Flavor to Local Foods

Intended Audience:

- 8 year olds-18 year olds
- Adults who work with youth on food topics

Lesson Objectives:

Session participants will:

- Plant a seed to experience the ease of growing food.
- Become interested and participate in local foods by growing their own plants.

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment and supplies:

- Jewelry bags (~2" by 3" zip lock plastic bags; 1 for each participant)
- Tomato seeds (3-4 for each participant)
- Paper plate
- Yarn (~30" length per youth)
- Cotton balls (1 for each participant)
- Small bowl/container with water (not provided in kit)
- Scissors (not provided in kit)
- Paper
- Writing utensils

Do Ahead:

- Review activity instructions.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Set-up three separate seed stations on a table:
 1. Cotton balls and water
 2. Seeds dumped on a plate
 3. Seal and thread station with yarn and scissors

Grow Your Own

BACKGROUND

The transformation of a tiny seed into an edible plant found in our grocery stores is one of nature's miracles. Anyone can participate in this transformation regardless of where they might live. This activity is designed to spark excitement in youth about participating in the local foods movement by experiencing the ease of growing plants.

WHAT TO DO

Activity:

Adapted from Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom's "Living Necklace" lesson: <http://aitc.oregonstate.edu/teachers/pdf/handson/living.pdf>

- As a large group, ask participants to respond out loud to the following questions to gauge their knowledge on local foods. Reference the "Overview of Local Foods" at the beginning of this curriculum for answers to the questions below:
 - What are the benefits of purchasing food grown locally?
 - What are the challenges of purchasing food grown locally?
 - What kind of foods grow in Ohio?
 - How could you participate in growing local foods?
 - No right or wrong answer, but collect answers until someone mentions planting their own food.
- Say, "Today, you will experience how easy it is to participate in local foods!"
- First, demonstrate the process of constructing a 'living necklace' for your audience. Each number is a 'station' on your table (steps are outlined below):
 1. Dip cotton ball in water and gently squeeze out the excess moisture so it is not dripping. Flatten it like a pancake or tortilla.
 2. Use the damp cotton ball to pick-up 3-4 seeds in the middle of the cotton ball and wrap the cotton around the tomato seeds.
 3. Place the seeds and cotton ball in the jewelry bag and seal tight. Cut and thread a piece of yarn through the hole at the top of the bag, and tie the ends to make the necklace.
- Instruct participants to form a line at the beginning of the table and progress through each step; sit back in their chairs upon completion. Monitor and assist participants.
- Each student will wear his or her "living necklace" home. The seeds should sprout in three to five days.



Sources:

- Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom's "Living Necklace" lesson:
<http://aitc.oregonstate.edu/teachers/pdf/handson/living.pdf>
- Locate a local farmer's market:
<http://www.localharvest.org>
- Research Ohio products:
<http://www.ohioproud.org/searcpartners.php>
- Learn more about local foods in Ohio:
www.localfoods.osu.edu

Additional lessons in this series can be found online at:
<http://localfoods.osu.edu/adding-youth-flavor-extensions-signature-programs>

- After the seeds sprout (about three-five days), instruct the youth to plant the seed in a container with soil and put it in a warm place to receive sunlight. The plants can also be transplanted outside between the months of May-June.
- Pass out paper and writing utensils. Instruct the youth to copy down plant care instructions that the facilitator will read from the back of the seed packet, including planting depth, space, temperature, etc. See an example below.



TALK IT OVER

Reflect and ask:

- Ask, "Based on the activity and what you already know, what things does a seed need to sprout and survive?"
 - Answers: water, a medium (soil, cotton ball), sunlight, and correct temperature
- "Where could you plant vegetables and fruits at your home to produce your own food?"
 - Example answers: garden in the yard, flower bed, pots or containers (especially for youth living in the city)
- "What other food have you seen growing in Ohio that we could also grow in our homes?"
 - Example answers: corn, beans, tomatoes, asparagus, strawberries, peas, broccoli, onions, herbs, potatoes, carrots, watermelon, grapes, pumpkins, peppers, etc.

Apply:

- Encourage others to purchase local foods and next time you go to the store, commit to purchasing \$10 worth of local foods.
- Talk with your parents and craft a plan for how your family might start or expand growing their own food, whether in a garden or in containers.
- Find additional ideas at: <http://localfoods.osu.edu/ohio-local-foods-week/ideas-celebrating>

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