

Harvesting Kindness

ALL GRADES

Gardening programs offer many opportunities to show kindness to each other, to the community, and to our planet. This lesson is designed specifically for when there is an abundance of produce to harvest, more than just one class could use, to inspire students to think of others. Students will harvest their crops, conduct a taste test, and then decide how to donate the excess of their harvest.

SUBJECT

EXPLORE/KINDNESS

TIME

OPEN-ENDED

MATERIALS

Read aloud book from the Garden Library (optional)

Buckets (or containers to collect harvest)

Scissors

Trowels

Colanders

Sink or hose

Paper towels

Food-grade bowls (if available)

Taste Test Evaluation, 1 sheet per student

Pencils, 1 per student

Clipboards, 1 per student

DIRECTIONS

- The garden is a great place for teaching empathy for others and modeling kindness. Often the school garden operates in “boom or bust” cycles, meaning there are times when plants are germinating and very little appears to be happening to the naked eye, or conversely an entire garden bed of lettuce must be harvested before it goes to seed. This lesson is designed to get students thinking about what to do when we have abundant resources and to model compassionate behaviors.
- If your class notices that some garden beds are bursting with crops ready to be harvested, but you didn't plant the crops, check with your school's garden coordinator before harvesting to ensure the crops are not already spoken for.
- Gather students in the garden around a garden bed with a successful crop that you plan to harvest. For younger students read *If You Plant a Seed* by Kadir Nelson or *Katie's Cabbage* by Katie Stagliano and ask questions about sharing and how it makes them feel when their friends share with them in class or when their siblings share with them at home.
- As a group, discuss how you might conduct an act of kindness with the food growing in the garden bed. Below are some examples of successful sharing outcomes from EUSD schools.
- **K-2 Salad Party:** Students harvest an entire garden bed of lettuce and celebrate with a huge salad for their class **AND** a salad for all of the teachers. Students write thank you notes for teachers and school staff and place the salad in the Teachers' Lounge.
- **3rd-4th Taste Test Sharing:** Students harvest a crop, like snap peas, peaches, cherry tomatoes, figs, passion fruit, grapes... and hold a taste test first for the class **AND** set up a “taste-test” table during their lunch to share the harvest with fellow classmates.
- **4th-6th: Food Pantry:** Students harvest a crop and prepare it to be delivered to a local food pantry. Often food pantries do not receive fresh fruit and vegetables. There are several food pantries nearby EUSD schools. Contact the district's garden liaison, Barbara Larson of BCK Programs (barbara@bckprograms.com) to arrange for the crop to be delivered.
- Harvesting vegetables that students grew can be a thrilling experience, but can also get chaotic with an entire class gathered around one garden bed. Some tips to help manage the large group are to:
 - Set up several different stations so students can eventually spread out. Older students can manage the stations, while



younger students will need assistance (additional help from another adult is ideal).

- Set out colanders at the sink or hose and assign students to the **Washing Station** where they will rinse all the soil off the vegetables and then take them to the Drying Station.
 - Set up a clean table with paper towels and bowls (if you have them) and assign students to a **Drying Station** where they will dry the vegetables using paper towels.
 - After all the plants have been harvested, assign students to the **Clearing Station** where they will pull out the remaining plants and place them in a pile. Have students wash their hands after this task.
 - After the vegetables are washed and dried, gather in the outdoor classroom and conduct a taste test. How do students rate their crops? Distribute the Taste Test Evaluation to students.
 - Pack up the remaining crops to share with others.
- **NOTE:** Whichever manner your students choose to use to share the crops, make sure the produce is thoroughly washed.

SOURCE

- BCK Programs



Taste Test Evaluation

Food Tasted: _____

	Rate one to five stars (draw) ★★★★★	Description
Look		
Smell		
Texture		
Taste		
Overall Rating		

