

LEARN



Bell

facts

- Spanish translation: *El pimiento o El chile* • Hmong translation: *Kua Txob*
- Peppers originated in Mexico, Central America, and South America where they were part of the diet at least 7,500 years ago.
- Peppers can be divided into two categories, hot and sweet. Hot peppers contain a compound called capsaicin which makes them hot and spicy.
- The most common varieties of sweet peppers include red, yellow, and green bell peppers, purple peppers, lunchbox peppers, banana peppers, and pimiento peppers. Red, orange, and yellow bell peppers are very ripe green bell peppers.
- There are many varieties of hot peppers, also known as chilis, including Anaheim, ancho (dried poblano), cayenne, chipotle, Fresno, habanero, jalapeño, poblano, and serrano.
- In plant science, peppers are considered a fruit because they contain seeds, but most people recognize peppers as a vegetable.



Jalapeño



Lunchbox

EAT



nutrition & seasonality

• Key nutrients:

Vitamin C - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage. Red bell peppers have more than twice the vitamin C as green peppers.

Folate - Helps prevent birth defects, is needed to make DNA, and helps your cells divide, including red blood cells.

Vitamin E - Functions as an antioxidant to help prevent chronic diseases, like heart disease.

- Fresh peppers grown in Wisconsin are available from July through October. Hot peppers can be dried for future use.

TASTE



taste testing

Taste a variety of sweet pepper colors and shapes. Prior to taste testing you can also build excitement and anticipation around trying new foods by using a Mystery Bag. Place the different types of peppers inside a small bag (paper or fabric bags work great). Go around the group and let everyone feel the peppers without guessing. Once everyone has had a chance, allow the group to share what they think it is. Then let the kids know they will all get a chance to taste the peppers. Make predictions about whether the peppers will smell and taste the same or different. After tasting, ask which color they like best.



FUN



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

activity: The Color Harvest

Objective: Students will recognize the different vegetable color groups.

Read book: *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert or
Green is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors by Roseanne Greenfield Thong

Discussion Questions:

- Where does food come from?
- Can you think of some vegetables that are grown in a garden or on a farm?
- Who has tasted any of these fruits or vegetables before?
- Can you think of a fruit or vegetable that comes in more than one color?
- Can you name a fruit or vegetable for each color of the rainbow?
e.g. orange: carrots, sweet potatoes; purple: grapes, eggplant; red: radishes, red peppers;
yellow: corn, potatoes; green: kale, spinach; white: cauliflower, white potatoes; blue: blueberries
- How do these different fruits and vegetables help us grow?
Fruits and vegetables are good for our bodies because they are packed with nutrients like vitamins and minerals! For older kids, you could explain that fruits and vegetables contain the nutrients listed above, like vitamins C, E, and folate.

— Adapted from: *Got Veggies? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum*

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning:

Share a video of *Growing Vegetable Soup* read aloud <https://youtu.be/LRDynkCgAj4> or
Green is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors read aloud https://youtu.be/8dVDQk_ATds.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ



books

- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert
- *Green is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors* by Roseanne Greenfield Thong
- *A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds* by Jean Richards



planting

Peppers prefer warm weather. They are sensitive to frost and do not grow well in cold, wet soil. It is best to start seeds indoors in the late winter and then transplant into the garden in late spring when the soil and air have warmed. Pepper plants are smaller than tomato plants, but they can get top heavy as the fruit grows. You may need to use cages or stakes to help the plants stay upright.

harvesting

Harvest peppers green at any size or leave them on the plant to ripen to red, yellow, orange, or purple. Hot peppers develop more heat as they turn to their mature color. The stems of peppers are brittle, so it is best to cut rather than pull peppers off by hand. The more you harvest the more peppers your plants will produce.