



# early childhood ACTIVITY GUIDE GREENS

## LEARN



### facts

- Spanish translation, spinach: *Las espinacas*; Swiss chard: *Las acelgas*
- Hmong translation: *Zaub Ntsuab*
- Greens are leafy vegetables.
- Beet greens, spinach, and swiss chard are types of green leafy vegetables.



Beet greens

## EAT



**GRAB**  
your  
**GREENS**



### nutrition & seasonality

- Leafy greens have calcium.
- Share with children: Calcium helps build strong bones and teeth.
- Fresh greens grown in Wisconsin are available from May through October.

## TASTE



Nutritious,  
Delicious,  
Wisconsin!

### taste testing

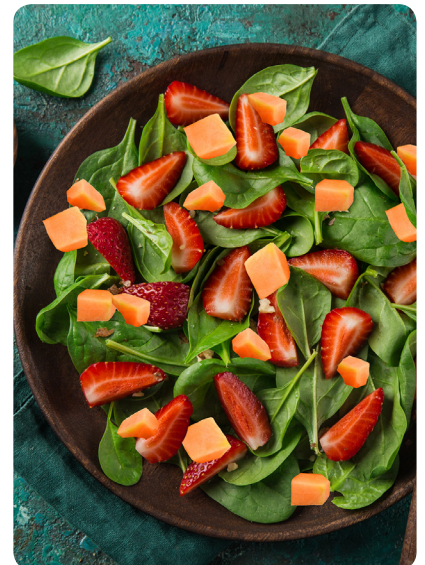
#### Prepare a quick Spinach-Strawberry-Cantaloupe Salad

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 12 ½-cup child-size servings

- 4 cups fresh spinach leaves
- 1 cup bite-size pieces of fresh strawberries
- 1 cup bite-size pieces of fresh cantaloupe
- Poppy seed salad dressing or raspberry vinaigrette

1. Wash and prepare spinach, strawberries, and cantaloupe. Children can help use a salad spinner to wash spinach and help wash and dry strawberries.
2. Tear spinach and cut fruit into bite-size pieces. Children can help tear spinach into pieces.
3. Toss spinach and fruit pieces together in a large bowl.
4. Dress lightly with dressing of choice.
5. Serve immediately. Refrigerate any leftovers.



## FUN



Spinach

### Share pictures

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

## activity: Spinach Mystery Box

**First**, make several mystery boxes out of cardboard boxes. Cut a hole in the side of the box, 4 inches in diameter, large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck. Instead of boxes, you can also use a small paper bag.

**Next**, wash spinach leaves, at least three leaves per child. Reserve at least one pre-washed leaf per child for tasting. Place a handful of spinach leaves in the Mystery Box/Bag.

One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box/bag with the child. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels.

After everyone has guessed, reveal the spinach. Show the spinach to the children. Note the children's guesses that were close (leaves, a plant, food) or correct (spinach). Offer each child a clean leaf of spinach to look at, touch, and smell. Talk about spinach.

### Ask Questions:

- Is spinach a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
- What color is it? (Green)
- Do the leaves feel thick or thin? (Thin)
- How does the outside of it feel? (Smooth and bumpy)
- Is the spinach leaf light or heavy? (Very light like a feather)
- Is it soft or hard? (Soft like the leaf from a tree)
- Is the stem on the spinach leaf thick or thin? (Thin)
- Has anyone ever tasted a spinach leaf? (Yes or no)
- When you bite or tear the spinach leaf, what color do you see inside? (Green)



Photo Credit: Ashland, Bayfield & Iron Counties FoodWise Program

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## READ



## books

- *Sylvia's Spinach* by Katherine Pryor
- *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French

Bright Lights  
Swiss Chard



## GARDEN CONNECTION

### planting

Greens are perfect for growing in school gardens! Growing greens in the fall is ideal because harvesting fits well with the academic calendar, but greens can be grown in the spring as well. Greens grown in the summer can taste bitter. Most greens (especially spinach) are quick growing, frost-tolerant, and generally easy to grow. Plant a variety of chard, spinach, and other greens to make a "salad garden". Plant seeds directly in the garden.

### harvesting

Harvest spinach whenever the leaves are large enough to use, about 3-6 inches. Spinach is usually best if it is cut while young. Harvest chard while the leaves are young and tender or after they mature and are larger. Chard stems are edible too! Cut off outer leaves individually and let the inner leaves continue to grow for a future harvest.