



early childhood ACTIVITY GUIDE TOMATOES

LEARN



facts

- Spanish translation: *El tomate*
- Hmong translation:
Txiv Lws Suav/Txiv Lws Liab
- Tomatoes contain the plants' seeds inside, which technically makes them fruit. However, most people recognize tomatoes as a vegetable.
- Tomatoes are most common in shades of red, but orange, yellow, green, pink, and purple varieties exist too.



EAT



nutrition & seasonality

- Tomatoes have lycopene. Lycopene is an antioxidant that helps protect our cells from damage and can reduce our risk of chronic diseases.

Share with children: Lycopene protects our cells and helps keep them healthy as we grow.

- Fresh tomatoes grown in Wisconsin are available from mid-July through September.



TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

Select several different types of tomatoes for children to try. Encourage children to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste the tomatoes.

Ask children to describe how the tomatoes are similar or different.

- How do they look?
- What do they smell like?

Record answers on chart paper.



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FUN



activity: Bear and Bunny Grow Tomatoes

Gather a bag of mixed tomatoes: yellow tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, roma tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, etc.

Show the children all of the tomatoes and have them pass around the different tomatoes. Ask the children what they are.

Ask the children what the tomatoes feel and smell like. Are they heavy? Light?

Read *Bear and Bunny Grow Tomatoes* by Bruce Koscielniak. Make connections between the tomatoes in the story and the tomatoes the children passed around.

While you are reading, ask children questions, like:

- Has anyone tasted a tomato?
What do tomatoes taste like?
- Does your family eat tomatoes? What kinds?
- How do tomatoes grow? (on a vine)
- Does anyone grow tomatoes at home?
- Talk about the different ways you can eat tomatoes.
Ask the children when they eat tomatoes.
Explain that you can eat tomatoes pureed in pizza sauce, pasta sauce, ketchup, or whole in salads!

— Adapted from *Harvest for Healthy Kids*

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



READ



books

- *Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child
- *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine* by Mari Schuh
- *A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds* by Jean Richards
- *Bear and Bunny Grow Tomatoes* by Bruce Koscielniak
- *Tomatoes to Ketchup* by Inez Snyder

GARDEN CONNECTION

planting

Tomatoes can easily grow in the ground, raised beds, or pots. Tomato seeds are usually started indoors and then transplanted outside once the soil is warm and all danger of frost has passed. Tomatoes prefer full sun and well-drained soil. Some tomato plants can get up to 6 feet tall! It is important to provide support for your tomato plant, such as individual stakes, trellises, or cages.

harvesting

When tomatoes reach full color and they feel firm when gently squeezed, they are ready for picking!