



# ACTIVITY GUIDE

## CARROTS

### LEARN



#### facts

- Spanish translation: *La zanahoria* • Hmong translation: *Qos*
- Carrots were first used for medicine in Asia over 3,000 years ago. These carrots were not orange, they were purple and yellow! The pilgrims brought orange carrot seeds with them when they settled in the United States.
- Carrots are a type of root vegetable, meaning that the part we eat grows underground and is called a taproot (a large, tapered root). The leafy green tops of the carrots can be eaten too.
- Carrots come in a rainbow of colors including purple, yellow, white, red, and orange. All carrots are nutrient-dense, but each color offers different phytochemicals which act as antioxidants in our body, protecting our cells from damage.

### EAT



#### nutrition & seasonality

##### • Key nutrients:

**Beta-carotene** - Carrots are best known for being an excellent source of beta-carotene. Our bodies turn beta-carotene into Vitamin A, which is important for keeping your skin and bones healthy, resisting and fighting infection, and good eyesight.

**Potassium** - Helps maintain normal blood pressure.

**Vitamin K** - Needed for blood clotting, preventing excessive bleeding.

- Fresh carrots grown in Wisconsin are available from mid-July through October. Carrots can be stored through winter.



### TASTE



#### taste testing

Taste different colored carrots.

**Ask:** Do they all taste the same?

Are any colors sweeter? You can also

compare raw carrots to boiled and

roasted carrots. How do the flavors

differ in the way each is prepared?

Are any of them sweeter? Roasting

vegetables brings out the natural sugars

and creates a delicious caramelization. This is a

healthy and easy way to prepare a vegetable side dish.

— Credit: Natasha Zill, RD Nutrition Education Manager, Nourish Farm

**CRUNCH**  
into  
**CARROTS**

Nutritious,  
Delicious,  
Wisconsin!

## FUN



### activity: Root Exploration

**Objective:** Students will understand the function of various types of roots.

**Supplies:** A variety of root vegetables, such as golden or cylindra beets, turnips, ginger, rutabaga, beauty-heart (watermelon) radish, black Spanish radish, orange and purple carrots, blue potatoes (technically a tuber), and sweet potatoes.

**Procedure:** Collect a variety of interesting root vegetables. Wash vegetables under cool running water. Organize kids into groups of four and tell them they are root veggie explorers. They will need to use their senses to look at, feel, smell, and taste these roots. Go around to each group and cut one sample of their root in half so they can see the inside. If possible, offer them a sample to taste (remember to have kids wash or sanitize their hands before tasting). Based on their observations about various root characteristics, the group should come up with a new and unique name for these roots. Have each group share the name of their root and explain how they arrived at that name. Afterwards, kids can look for ways that all the roots are like one another and how they are different.

— 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 pictures of different root vegetables. Tell students they are root veggie explorers and encourage them to look for ways that all the roots are like one another and how they are different. Based on their observations about various root characteristics, have kids come up with a new and unique name for these roots.

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



## READ



### books

- *The Giant Carrot* by Jan Peck
- *Carrot Soup* by John Segal
- *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss
- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- *Carrots Grow Underground* by Mari Schuh
- *Carrots* by Inez Snyder
- *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French
- *The Life Cycle of a Carrot* by Linda Tagliaferro

### planting

Plant carrot seeds in early spring. Carrot seeds are very small and difficult to space evenly (1/2 inch apart). Mixing the seeds with some coarse sand or dried coffee grounds before planting makes it easier to space seeds. Carrots are biennial, meaning they have a two-year life cycle. In the first year, the edible root is formed, which we eat. In the second year, the plant grows larger foliage and produces flowers and seeds. Consider leaving a carrot over the winter to see the carrot's interesting flower in the summer.

### harvesting

Harvest carrots when the roots are at least 1/2 inch thick (1-2 inches is ideal). To harvest carrots safely, loosen the soil carefully around your carrots then pull the carrots out by hand.