



Harvest Objectives

Children will compare spinach leaves.

Children will identify that spinach are the leaves of the plant.

Children will taste a piece of spinach.



Harvest Vocab

Leaf/Leaves

Materials & Prep

Various-sized spinach (small leaves and large leaves) and/or different varieties (New Zealand spinach, savoy spinach, semi-savoy spinach, Malabar spinach, red cardinal spinach (has red veins and stems))

Chalkboard/Whiteboard and chalk/whiteboard markers

Images (included at end of learning plan)

Knife & Cutting Board

Taste Test Chart

Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)

Literature Connections

Sylvia's Spinach by Katherine Pryor

Vegetables, Vegetables! (Rookie Read-About Science) by Fay Robinson

Warm Up

- In order to engage the children and activate prior knowledge, gather in a circle and pass around the spinach. Have everyone touch and look at the leaves, and ask them to think about how they would describe them (size, shape, color, weight, texture, smell, etc.) Do not tell them what it is. Tell the children to think of the name for the food, but to keep their answer inside their head. Then when everyone has held the spinach, ask them, "What is this called?" Consider having everyone say the answer aloud on the count of three. This way you'll know how many children in the group know.
- Then discuss, have ever seen it before? Eaten one before? How was it prepared? Where do they think spinach comes from? How does it grow? (On trees, bushes?)
- Then choose two spinach sizes/varieties and draw a Venn diagram on the board. Write the two spinach types above each circle. Holding up the spinach, ask the children what they have in common (texture, size, color, etc.) Record their observations in the middle of the Venn diagram. Then hold up just one. Record their descriptions that only fit that spinach piece. Repeat with the second spinach piece. Note: To make this activity more kinesthetic, in small groups (no more than 8 children), have each child come up with a describing word and write it on a sticky label, or post-it note. Then the child can stick their own word onto the Venn diagram.

Explain



- Explain that botanically they are vegetable (because we eat the leaves and there are no seeds inside). What other botanical vegetables can they think of? (Carrots, beets, onion, etc.) If possible, put out pictures of fruits and vegetables and have the children think about which ones are vegetables.
- Explain why we should eat spinach (helps heal cuts, healthy immune system, healthy, healthy eyes, healthy bodies, healthy muscles, and healthy bones) and for each reason come up with an action to help the children remember. For example, for healthy immune system they can shake one finger while saying “no” and then put a hand on their forehead while saying “fever.” Also explain how to pick good spinach (the leaves should be tender, bright green in color, and sturdy.) Please see the next pages for images to share with the children.

Taste Test & Wrap-Up

- After rinsing the spinach, give each child a leaf to taste.
- Create a chart that says “I Like” with a smiley face and “I Don’t Like” with a sad face. Give each child a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number of children that like, and don’t like spinach and write that number in each column.
- Review with the children how spinach grows and the health benefits.

Taste Test Extension

Rule of 15 “Put a food on the table at least 15 times to see if a child will accept it.” Susan B. Roberts, Tufts University Nutritionist and Co-author of Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health

For an additional tasting experience, prepare this recipe with children in class using different stations, or ahead of time, and serve it with this lesson, or on a different day to expand the Harvest of the Month experience.

Berry Spinach Smoothie (for 20 children)

(adapted from: <http://reneeclerkin.com/recipe/berry-spinach-smoothie/>)

6 2/3 cups spinach leaves—1/3 cup per child
5 cups water or skim milk or rice milk—1/4 cup per child
5 cups frozen berries—1/4 cup per child
5 bananas—1/4 banana per child
Blender
Mixing bowls & Measuring Cups (optional)
Cup (1 per child)



1. Rinse the spinach under running water. Have the water, berries, and bananas peeled and cut and available for the children to measure.
2. Invite the children to wash their hands and come to the table for a cooking lesson.



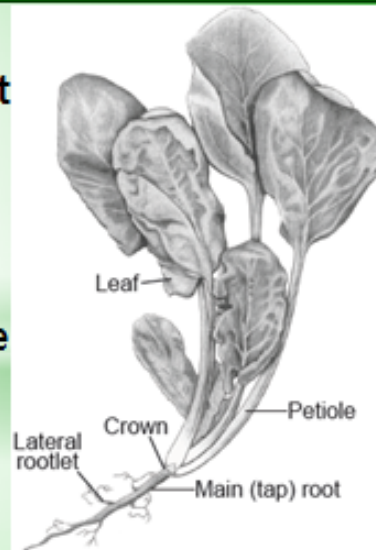
Preschool In-Class Learning Plan
Spinach

3. After demonstrating, have one child measure and add the spinach to the blender and another add the water/milk. Blend thoroughly. (This way there are not spinach chunks in your smoothie.)
4. Have the other children measure and add remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth and creamy. Serve in cups and enjoy!

How does **Spinach** grow?



Spinach grows best in sandy soils in cool weather. We eat the leaves of the spinach plant.



Why should we eat
Spinach?

**Plus
More!**

Vitamin K Vitamin A Vitamin C



Heals Cuts



Healthy eyes



Healthy immune system
(heals cuts, prevents colds)

B Vitamins



Healthy bodies
(cell energy)

Iron



Healthy muscles

Calcium



Healthy bones