

NOVEMBER

SWEET POTATO

ROOT VEGETABLES

GRADE
2-3

RECOMMENDED BOOK

"The Little Sweet Potato" by Amy Beth Bloom
"Oliver's Vegetables" by Vivian French
"In the Garden with Dr. Carver" by Susan Grigsby
"The Creepy Carrots" by Aaron Reynolds

NEEDED SUPPLIES

Sweet potatoes, raw or cooked
MyPlate poster and "What Do We Need?" worksheet
Sweet potato slip directions (Optional: supplies to start a slip)
Food models

NEEDED RESOURCES

"FUNtervals: Thanksgiving Feast"

21ST CENTURY SKILL

Students will learn the importance of vegetables in a healthy diet.

- Practice preventive health behaviors.
- 2-3: Choose healthy foods.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn that sweet potatoes are part of the vegetable food group and are the roots of plants.
- Students will learn the importance of sweet potatoes in a healthy diet.
- Students will learn that sweet potatoes grow from sweet potato slips.
- Students will learn to try a new vegetable.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

"FUNtervals: Thanksgiving Feast"

RECAP FROM LAST LESSON

How many of you ate pears at home after our lesson last month? How did you eat them? What did you tell your grown-ups about pears? Did you ask for pears? What did you say? Your family wants you to eat healthy foods, like pears.

FUN FACTS ABOUT SWEET POTATOES

- The Native Americans were growing sweet potatoes when Columbus came to America in 1492. By the 16th century, sweet potatoes were being grown in the southern states.
- North Carolina is the top-producing state of sweet potatoes. They produce 50 percent of the nation's annual crop.
- Sweet potatoes are "cured" (placed in a newspaper-lined box) after harvest for about two weeks. During this time, the sweet potato starch changes to sweet sugar.
- Sweet potatoes are different from yams. Most "yams" labeled in the U.S. are actually sweet potatoes.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SWEET POTATOES

- The sweet potato grows underground; it is the root of the plant. Because it grows under the ground, we scrub the outside to remove soil and germs before we cut it open.
- It is very hard when harvested; when you cook it, it becomes soft.
- Sweet potatoes can be long and thin or short and fat, but always taper at the ends.
- Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry, well-ventilated container. Do not store in the refrigerator as it will produce a hard center and unpleasant taste.
- Sweet potatoes are usually the size of regular white potatoes. The smooth, thin skin can be eaten. Choose firm sweet potatoes with no signs of decay. Look for uniform shape for even cooking. Some sweet potatoes grow in Iowa.
- Find them in the grocery store fresh, canned or frozen.

ROOT VEGETABLE FEATURED TASTING: SWEET POTATO



ALTERNATIVES: CARROT



RADISH



JICAMA



POTATO



HEALTH CONNECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweet potatoes are part of the red/orange group in the MyPlate vegetable group. This group is important for our eyes and skin as it has a lot of Vitamin A. Reinforce with super goggles. (Use your fingers to make goggles for your eyes.) Sweet potatoes have a lot of Vitamin C, which is important to help cuts heal and keep us healthy. Reinforce with the Vitamin C shield by crossing arms in front of chest.
PART OF THE PLANT	Root Vegetable
DISCUSSION	<p>Think about the word “health” and what it means to you and the word “choice.” What do you think it means to make a healthy choice? What do you think a healthy food choice would be?</p> <p>Show the MyPlate poster. Ask students if they have heard of, can explain, or can identify any of the food groups. Discuss the five food groups from MyPlate. Can they identify and give examples of foods in each food group? (Optional: Set a timer for one minute per food group and allow students to blurt out examples. Write down answers on the board). Do they notice any differences in the food groups shown on the poster? The portion sizes are slightly different because we need different amounts from each food group. For example, we need more vegetables and fruit. Our plates should be half fruits and vegetables. We need to eat foods from all the food groups. (Idea: Use MyPlate “What Do We Need?” worksheet.)</p> <p>By eating a variety of foods from each food group, we give our bodies what they need to be healthy. What other behavior can help us stay healthy? (Being physically active 60 minutes a day.)</p> <p>(Discussion adapted from <i>USDA's Dig In!</i>)</p>
ACTIVITIES	<p>Put a variety of food models in a bag and have students pull one out and tell which food group it belongs in, or ask students their favorite food? Can they name the food group it belongs in?</p> <p>Explain that sweet potatoes start from slips that grow from the “eyes” or buds of the sweet potato. Show a real sweet potato slip or a picture of a sweet potato slip. The slips are then planted in the ground and sweet potatoes grow in the dirt. The sun and rain help them grow. The potatoes are the roots that grow underground, while their leaves grow above ground. They are carefully pulled from the ground when the weather turns cold. They are gently stored in a cool area to protect the tender skin.</p> <p>Grow a Potato Slip (see “Start a Sweet Potato Slip”). Use three wooden sticks to form a tripod to place half of the potato in water. Place jar in sunlit window. Let it grow until next lesson.</p>
TASTING	Taste sweet potatoes, raw or cooked. Students will vote with thumbs as to how they like sweet potatoes: thumbs up = I like it, thumbs sideways = it's okay, thumbs down = no thanks.
CLOSING DISCUSSION	<p>Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw but are usually cooked (boiled, microwaved, mashed or fried). Add them to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. You can also buy them canned or frozen. What is the vegetable we tried today? How does a sweet potato grow? Who wants to eat sweet potatoes again? How would you like to try sweet potatoes at home? Did you know you can cook sweet potatoes in the microwave? Tell your grown-ups that you like sweet potatoes. Ask your grown-up if they eat sweet potatoes?</p>

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TAKE-HOME MATERIALS

Pass out bingo incentives from last month. Pass out new bingo cards. Distribute "Ask me about...sweet potatoes" stickers. Send home the parent newsletter.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- [Click here](#) USDA MyPlate resources
- [Click here](#) MyPlate My State resources and teacher toolkit
- [Click here](#) SNAP-Ed Connections: Sweet Potatoes
- [Click here](#) California Harvest of the Month: Sweet Potato
- [Click here](#) Spend Smart. Eat Smart. Produce Basics: Sweet Potatoes
- [Click here](#) USDA Grow It, Try It, Like It Sweet Potato Hill
- [Click here](#) North Carolina Sweet Potatoes

OTHER WAYS TO EAT SWEET POTATOES

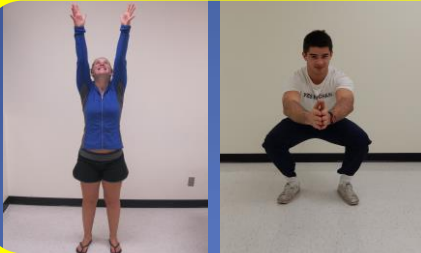
Mashed, microwaved, baked, George Washington Carver dip, sweet potato chips/stick, raw, crockpot with seasoning (cinnamon, salt & pepper, cumin), sweet potato fries, roasted cubes, creamy cooked with milk, soup, hash browns, sweet potato pie, sweet potato biscuits.



Thanksgiving Feast

Your mom put you in charge of Thanksgiving dinner this year (this year's turkey is giant sized!). Be sure to impress her with your culinary skills!

1



Grab ingredients from the top shelf and stuff the turkey:

Reach up and squat down while pushing out with arms

2



Chop up the fruits and vegetables:

scissor kicks with arms swinging back and forth

3



Mash the potatoes: Jump up and down. For big chunks do a power jump!

4



Make fruit smoothies: Twist body from left to right to blend up the fruit

Repeat

There are so many left over ingredients, why not make another round to help a family in need?

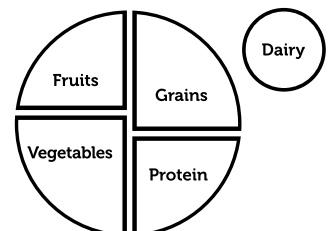
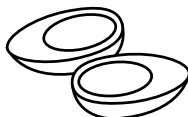
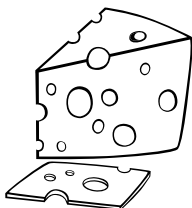
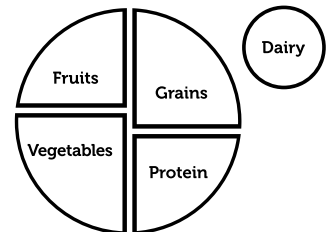
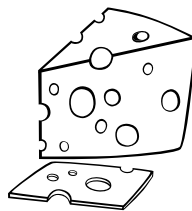
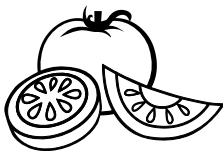
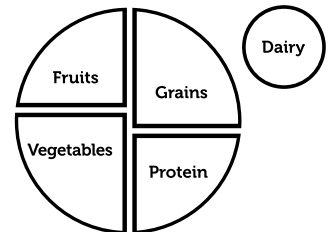
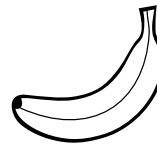
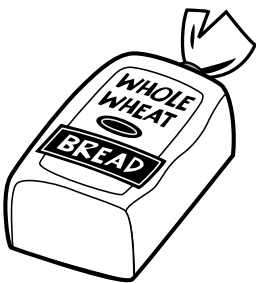
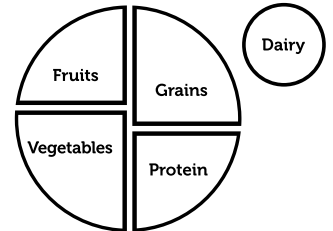
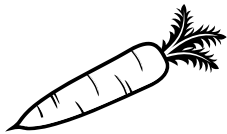
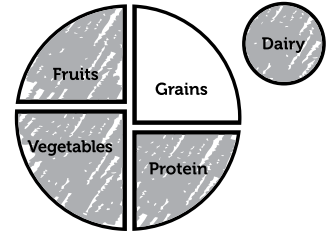
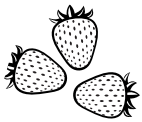
Lesson 2

What Do We Need?

Activity 3

Color in the plate for each food group you see.

What food group is missing?

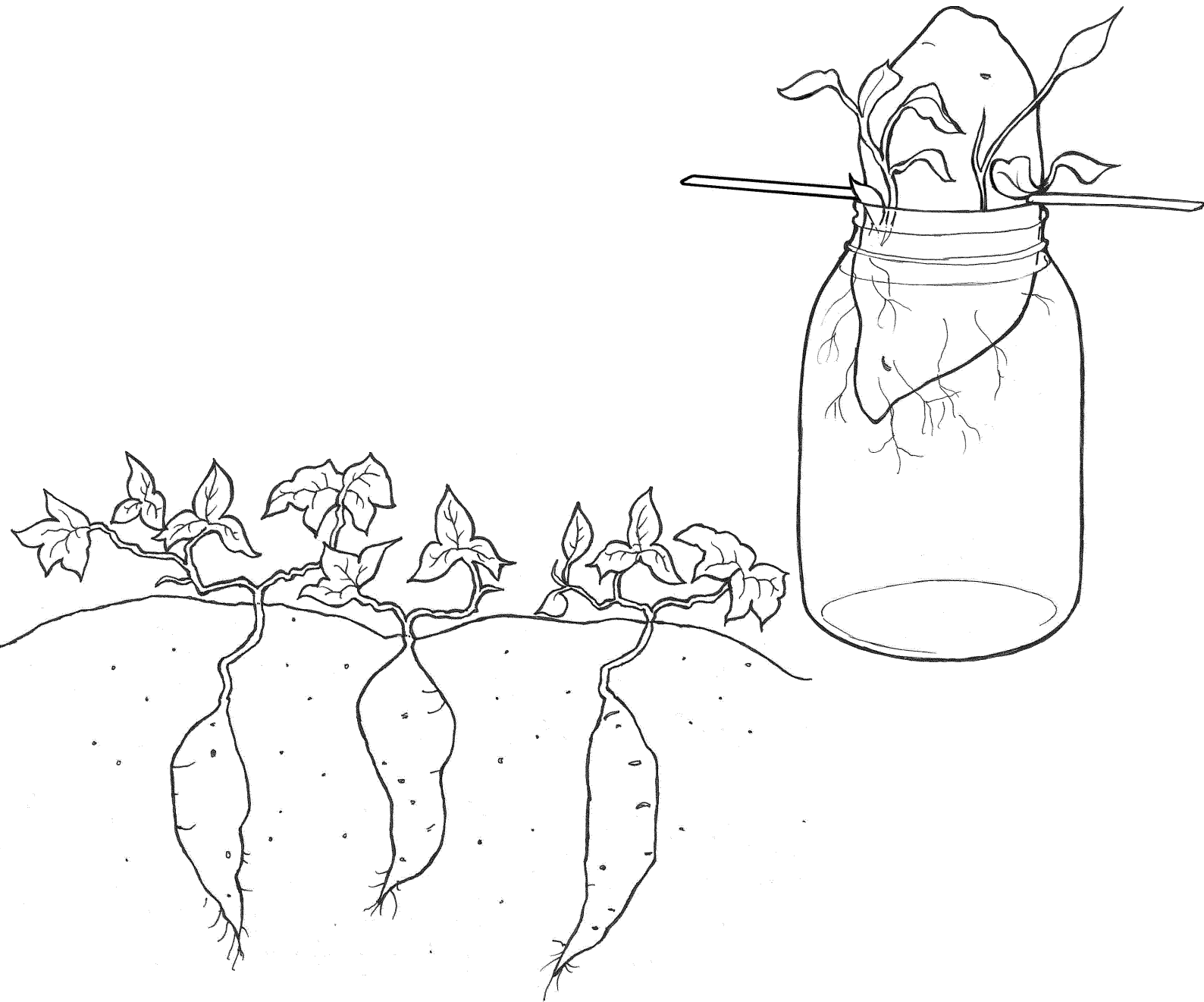


Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Your child has been learning about sweet potatoes. Talk with your child about how sweet potatoes grow while he or she colors the drawings below. Sweet potato plants grow from the eyes (buds) on sweet potatoes. The plant grows above the ground and the actual sweet potatoes grow in the ground.

A farmer plants slips in the ground to grow more sweet potatoes. You can start a sweet potato slip at home by suspending a sweet potato in a jar of water; see the directions on the other side of this page. In a few weeks, leaves and roots will grow from the sweet potato.



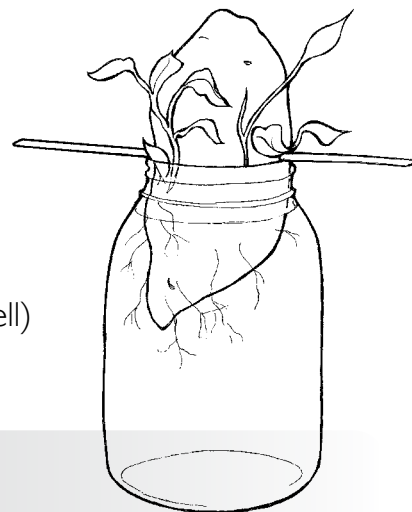
Start a Sweet Potato Slip

This activity starts a sweet potato slip from sweet potatoes and shows what slips need to grow into plants.

To grow plants that will produce sweet potatoes, purchase sweet potatoes from a nursery or mail order catalog; follow instructions provided. A sweet potato from the grocery store will sprout leaves and roots, but will not produce sweet potatoes if planted.

Materials Needed

- Unwashed sweet potato with eyes
- Sharp knife
- Permanent marker
- 3 wooden craft sticks
- Narrow mouth quart-size jar (an empty mayonnaise jar works well)
- Distilled or spring water



The Activity

- Help your child fill the quart-size jar with water, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of space between the water and top of the jar.
- Make three $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch horizontal slits evenly spaced around the middle of the sweet potato.
- Help your child push a wooden craft stick into each slit, at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch into the sweet potato flesh. The wooden craft sticks create a tripod that supports the sweet potato on the rim of the jar. This allows half of the potato to be below the water level and half above.
- Place the jars in a warm location at or above 65 degrees F. In about a month, the slip sprouts will grow 8 to 10 inches from the top half of the sweet potato, which is the best length for transplanting to the garden.
- Have your child check the jar weekly to see the progress of the slip sprouts.
- NOTE: Place the jars on top of a water heater to speed the growing process.
- Explain to your child that the sweet potato slips are planted in the soil outside. The slips need soil, rain, sun, and time to grow into sweet potato plants. Sweet potatoes will grow on the plants under the ground. The sweet potatoes will be ready to remove gently from the soil in the fall.