



Age 5-7



Time

Preparation and growing time -
2 to 3 months if growing from seed
Eating plants activity - 30 to 45 minutes

Materials

Trays of vegetables. Where possible the vegetable plant should be in its pot or container.

Pot grown vegetables may be *supplemented* by a selection of vegetables from your local shop or supermarket or by vegetables brought in by the children.

Extension activity:

You might like to encourage the children to sow their seeds in trays or pots.

Suggestions.

Radishes, lettuce, carrots, beans or peas.

Approximate growth times.

Radish: growth time - 5 to 6 weeks.

Bean: from seed to planting out - 1 month. From planting out to pod formation - 2 months.

activity 7

Through this activity children can learn:

- that we eat different parts of the plant
- that roots and leaves come in different shapes and sizes

Skills developed:

- observation
- classification

The activity:

- Show the children the typical structure of a plant: stem, leaf, root, flower. You might like to use Activity 3 - Teacher worksheets 1 and 2.
- Split the children into smaller groups and allocate each group a tray of vegetable plants. Ask each group to describe the leaves, and fruits (if they have them) on their plants.
- Help each group to carefully dig up one of the plants and lay it out. Ask each group to describe the roots of their plant.

Key questions:

Q1. Which part of each plant do we eat?

Extension activities:

- Using a larger selection of harvested vegetables collected from shops or supplied by the children, ask which part of the plant each harvested vegetable comes from (e.g. a *lettuce* is the leafy body of the *lettuce* plant; a *carrot* is the specialised tap root of a *carrot* plant; a *pea* is the seed of the *pea* plant).

Eating plants

- Introduce the idea of a food chain.
- Introduce the idea of poisonous plants and relate this to health and safety issues. Further details of poisonous plants and plants suitable for use in the primary classroom are given in the introduction to this pack.
- Discuss some of the things which plants can be used for including non-food uses of plants. Get the children to source examples and create a floor book or picture montage. Teacher worksheet 3 offers some examples of uses of plants.



Activity 7: Teacher worksheet 3

Most children will appreciate that many types of plants can be used as food both for themselves and other animals but it may be interesting to ask them to think about other uses of plants. Here are just some examples to help the discussion.

Stems

Woody stems can be used as fuel.

Paper is made from tiny pieces of wood mixed with water to make pulp. The pulp is squeezed dry between huge rollers to make paper.

Some stems have fibres (thin threads) which can be made into clothes. An example is the flax from the flax plant which can be woven into linen.

Leaves

Some leaves contain natural colourings which we call dyes. A blue coloured dye called indigo is made from the woad plant. Ancient Britons painted their faces with indigo to scare their enemies.

Leaves and stems can be used for animal bedding, for example straw is used in horse stables.

Some leaves and stems like those of the Raffia palm tree can be woven into mats and baskets.

Some leaves contain natural medicines. The peppermint plant contains a natural form of menthol.

Petals

Some petals like those of the elderflower can be pressed and help make up drinks like elderflower cordial and elderflower wine.

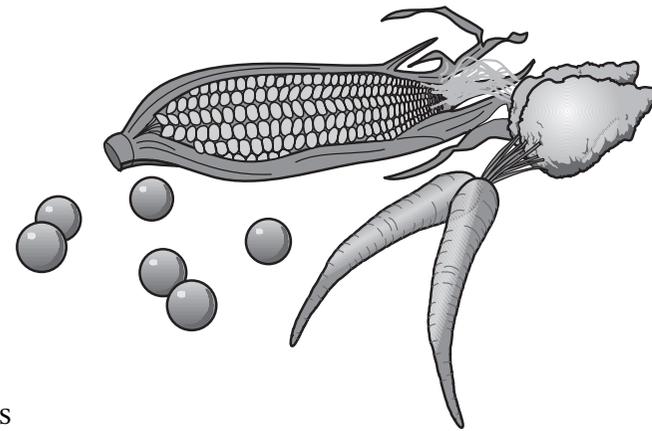
The petals of the henna plant contain a red dye called henna which is sometimes used in shampoo to colour hair.

Flower petals can be dried and used for pot pourri. Some, like the rose and Lilley of the Valley, are used to make perfume.

Roots

The root of the sugar beet plant is used to make sugar.

Many roots like turnips and carrots are a source of food.



Seeds

Many seeds are used as food. Examples include peas, sweetcorn and rice. We grind coffee beans to make coffee and wheat seeds to make flour and products like cornflakes.

Seeds contain *starch* which is used in glues and pastes like wallpaper paste; and *oils* which are used in many things including cooking oils, margarines, cosmetics, detergents and plastics.

