



Beets | Beet Exploration, Beet Chips, and Beet Stamps

Activities

Developed by: Gallatin Valley Farm to School (www.gvfarmtoschool.org)

Grades

Afterschool | K-5

Objectives

In this lesson students will explore the different parts and functions of beets. They will also discover a wide variety of uses for beets.

Students will be able to:

- Describe the health benefits of beets
- Understand the different parts and functions of the beet: leaves, taproot, storage root
- Identify a variety of uses for beets: food, sugar, dye

Materials

- Class set of beets (with and without tops)
- Beet Poster (or white/blackboard)
- Knife
- Cutting Board
- Class set of 8 ½ x 11 drawing paper, cut into thirds
- Wax paper (optional)
- Small cookie cutters (optional)
- Food service gloves

Dig Deeper

Get more information, register, or download resources:

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mtharvestofthemonth.org

Directions

- Pass out beets to each student. Be sure to inform students about beet stains beforehand and to keep hands and beets away from clothes.
- Ask students what they notice about the beets.
 - How are they similar to carrots?
 - What do you think all of the parts are called?
 - What do you think all of the parts do?
- Discuss the different parts and functions of the beet.
 - What is that whippy tail? Why do beets have it? It is the *taproot*. *It helps the beet drill deep into the ground to get water and nutrients from the soil where other plants may not be able.*

- What do the leaves do for the plants? *They collect energy from the sun and air and make it into food for the plant!*
- What about the big round part? This is the *storage root--this part holds onto all of that food, the taproot and leaves are working to provide the plant and holds onto them for later.*
- Ask the students how they think our body uses all of those nutrients the beet has been storing.
 - Beets are a great source of potassium and vitamin A. *Hopefully by now, students know that vitamin A is great for our eyes. Ask some students to show you what vitamin A does. Potassium is kind of like oil for the engine, it keeps many functions of our body moving smoothly.*
- Ask the students how we can use beets.
 - Eating!
 - Table sugar – Montana grows 1.5 million pounds of sugar beets, we are different than the beets we eat.
 - Food coloring – in tomato paste, natural animal crackers, desserts, jams, cereal!
 - Dye
- After discussing dyes, inform the students that you will be making beet stamp postcards. You will be pressing slices of beets onto pieces of drawing paper, leaving a stain in that shape. On the back of the card students will write a note to a friend or relative describing something they learned about beets today.
- Make sure to reiterate the staining power of beets and appropriate precautions to be taken. *“If beet color can stay on animal crackers, our skin, and cereal, what are some other things it might stay on? – Our clothes? Our neighbor’s clothes? The table? Let’s be extra careful!*
- Place pieces of wax paper underneath each student’s paper to prevent bleeding onto the desk or table.
- Slice the beets a variety of shapes about a ¼” thick. You may choose to use a mandolin. You may also choose to cut slices with cookie cutters to make well-defined shapes.
- Pass out beet slices to individuals or in bowls to groups.
- If you are worried about beet stain transfer, you may consider providing food service style gloves to students.
- Have the students press the beets onto the postcards and write a message to a friend on the back describing something they learned about beets today.
- After the postcards are finished, pass around premade beet chips for students to try. These can be store bought if you are in a hurry or prepared from the recipe in the Harvest of the Month Classroom Bites: Beets recipe.
- Cheers to beets!



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, Montana Organic Association, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemoth.org.

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