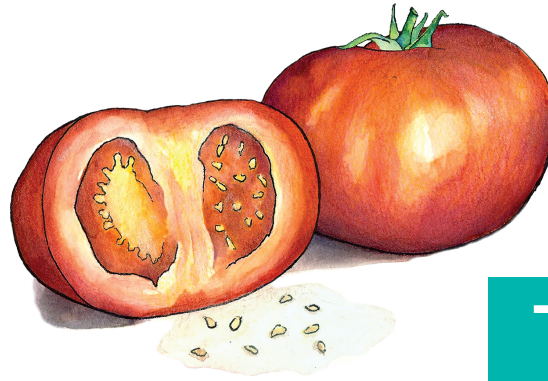


HARVEST of the MONTH in the CLASSROOM



TOMATOES

HISTORY

Tomatoes are a member of the family Solanaceae, along with eggplants, peppers and potatoes. They are native to Central America and Mexico; their dissemination throughout the globe was sparked by the Spanish's colonization of the Americas

FUN FACTS

In Massachusetts, over 500 farms produce 6.5 million pounds of tomatoes every year.

Tomatoes are classified as a fruit because they develop from a flower and have seeds.

Tomatoes are in the nightshade family along with eggplants, peppers, and potatoes.

There are over 25,000 varieties of tomatoes, from tiny currant tomatoes to giant beefsteak tomatoes.

FARMER BIO

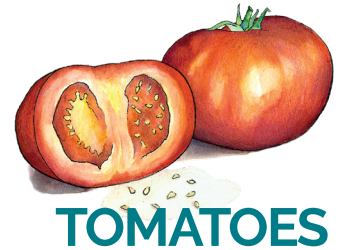


Dean Landale is a former ironworker who built big buildings but now grows 20 acres of mixed vegetables at Bar's Farm in Deerfield, Massachusetts on land that has been farmed since 1800. This season they're growing 5,000 jalapenos that they will make into hot sauce and sell to a distillery in Boston. Bar's Farm grows a variety of other vegetables including winter squash, zucchini, green beans, lettuce, cauliflower, flowers and tomatoes. Dean says that their customer's favorite variety of tomato is BHN 589, which is a beefsteak that grows well in hoop houses (see photo!).

Photo credit: Bars Farm

TOMATO CHALLENGE

Grades K-3 • 30 minutes



OBJECTIVES

Students will practice using their observational skills to understand that there are different varieties of fruits and each will look, taste and feel slightly different.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How are different varieties of tomatoes similar and different? Why do you think we grow different kinds of tomatoes? Do different tomato varieties taste the same?

MA STATE FRAMEWORK(S)

K-3 Life Science Standards

- K-LS1-2 (MA)
- 1-LS3-1
- 2-LS2-3 (MA)

MATERIALS

One tomato for each student
Have a variety of similarly sized tomatoes with different shades/colors, skin imperfections, etc.

Paper

Clipboards

Pencils and/or colored pencils

Retractable measuring tapes

Cutting board

Knife

Tasting cups or plates

PROCEDURE

Introduction:

Ask your students what they know about tomatoes. Are all tomatoes the same? Explain to students that there are many varieties of tomatoes and they can differ in color, shape and taste. Tell students that each of them will get a unique tomato. Define the word unique. Hold up 2 very similar red tomatoes and explain that there can even be small differences between tomatoes that might have things in common. Let students know that using careful observation, they are going to draw and color their unique tomato on paper. They will use a measuring tape to measure how big around it is and how tall it is. Then they will write one detail about their tomato under their drawing. The drawing and detail should be so clear that when all the tomatoes are put back in the bowl, the class will be able to identify the tomato they observed.

TOMATO CHALLENGE

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PROCEDURE

Activity

Model the activity for students by drawing a tomato, measuring, and writing one detail/clue about the tomato. Give each student a tomato to work with. When everyone is finished (about 10 minutes) put the tomatoes back in the bowl. Sit in a circle. One by one each student will show their tomato drawing and share their clue with the class. A different student will try to pick the tomato from the bowl that was just described. Let every student take a turn.

Challenge: Add extra tomatoes in the bowl to make the process of elimination more difficult.

Closing

Sample and taste a variety of tomatoes (3 is usually a good amount). Encourage conversation about differences and similarities in tomatoes. If there's time, you can make a list on the board of tasting words.

EXTENSIONS & VARIATIONS

Extension

Categorize tomatoes by weight, measurements, colors, etc. relate this to a farmer's job of selling tomatoes.

Variation

Use winter squash, pumpkins, bean pods, or any fruit or veggie for this exercise.