

HARVEST of the MONTH in the CLASSROOM



HERBS

HISTORY

Many different types of culinary and medicinal herbs can be grown in Massachusetts. Basil is native to India and is commonly used in Laotian, Mediterranean (especially Italian), Thai, and Vietnamese cooking. Mint's most popular species are peppermint and spearmint, due to their intensely aromatic oils. The herb is native to the Mediterranean and grows as a perennial in Massachusetts. Oregano is native to northern Europe and is a prominent ingredient in Mediterranean and French cuisine.

FUN FACTS

Basil was part of the embalming process in ancient Egypt.

In the past, rosemary was used to kill germs. People burned rosemary in sick people's rooms.

The word "herb" comes from the Latin word herba, meaning grass, green stalks, or blades.

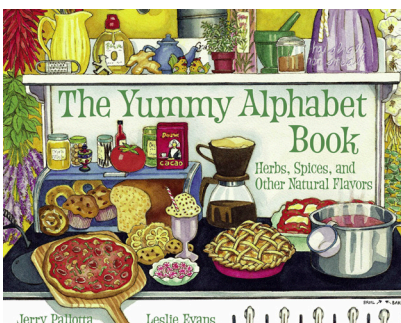
Chives have an insect repelling property that can be utilized in a garden to control pests.

BOOK RECOMENDATIONS



Cox, Jeff. The Cook's Herb Garden. 2010.

From garden to table, this book will guide you through planting, growing, harvesting, and cooking herbs. Included is a visual index of 120 culinary herbs and more than 30 delicious recipes to make with them. Once you have harvested your herbs, learn the different ways you can store them for future meals, such as, freezing or drying them.



Pallotta, Jerry. The Yummy Alphabet Book. 1994.

Welcome to a delectable alphabet adventure. While on your way to "Z is for Zatar," relish the savory Mustard, the aromatic Spearmint, and the spicy Wasabi. You'll also want to try the Kola, the Vanilla, and especially the Xocoatl! Mouth-watering illustrations and informative, child-appealing text makes this a delicious treat for hungry readers.

HERBS: OBSERVATION

Grades K-2 • 60 minutes



HERBS

OBJECTIVES

Students will use the power of observation to learn the common name, properties of various herbs, and find similarities and differences.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What are herbs and how are they used?
How are herbs used in medicine and cooking?

MA STATE FRAMEWORK(S)

- 1-LS3-1

MATERIALS NEEDED

Herbs (fresh or dried)
Paper
Writing Utensils (pens, markers, pencils)

PROCEDURE

Introduction

Ask students if they know the names of any herbs. Pass around a spring of lavender or basil or mint for students to smell. What do they notice?

Activity

Discussion: Ask the following questions.

What is an herb?

An herb is defined as a non-woody, seed bearing plant, or part of a plant that is used for food, medicine or flavoring. When we use a plant for its flavors, we call it a "culinary herb" and when we use it for its healing qualities, we call it a "medicinal herb" but there is a lot of overlap, and our favorite herbs for flavor may also help our bodies in different ways.

What part of the plant do we use?

Often we use the leaves of herbs, but seeds, and roots often have culinary and medicinal uses too. Explain and show the different parts of an herb, either using fresh herbs or images.

How is an herb different from a spice?

Herbs and spices both come from plants but herbs are the fresh part of the plant while spice is the dried root, dried stalk, seed or dried fruit of the plant and is almost always dried not fresh.

Lesson adapted from:
Vermont Harvest of the Month

HERBS: OBSERVATION

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PROCEDURE

Pass around examples of dried and fresh herbs if available.

- What are the similarities and differences between the herbs?
- What do you notice about the plants?
- What shape are the leaves?
- What shape is the stem?
- What foods does each herb smell like?
- Rub the leaves and then smell your fingers.

Cater the discussion to age levels and appropriateness/knowledge.

Divide the class into small groups and give each group some samples to observe. Have students draw and make observations as they work.

EXTENSIONS AND VARIATIONS

Take an herb walk!

In the spring or summer, take a walk outside the classroom to identify some wild herbs that grow outside.

Invite a Guest to the Classroom

Invite a local herbalist to come share their knowledge. [Walking the World in Wonder](#) by Ellen Hopman is a great kid (and adult) friendly herb resource book with photos, descriptions of uses, and recipes. You could bring this along on a walk, or bring your favorite field guide.

Plan an Herb Garden

What culinary and medicinal herbs will you plant in your herb garden? Map out your herb garden on graph paper, making it 24 square feet, and write a paragraph description of your garden. Did you put culinary herbs and medicinal tea herbs? How do you plan to use the plants? What parts of the plants will you be using?

Grow Herb Seeds in the Classroom

Is there access to a sunny window, or grow lights in the classroom? Start seeds with students for the school garden, or for students to take home, and discuss care for the seeds and mature plants.