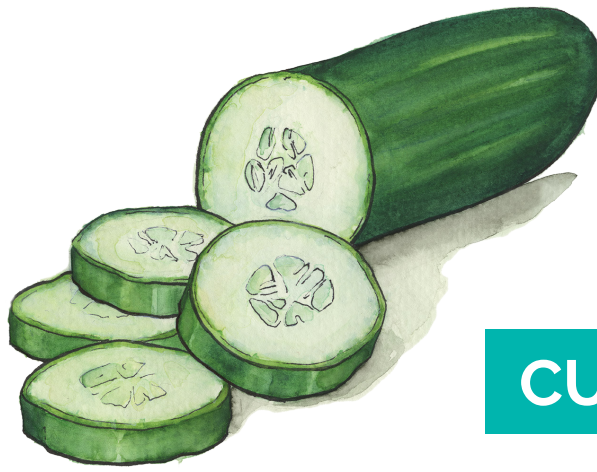


# HARVEST of the MONTH in the CLASSROOM



## CUCUMBERS

### HISTORY

The cucumber was first cultivated in India over 3,000 years ago and is one of our oldest vegetables. Cave excavations have revealed that cucumber has been grown as a food source for over 3000 years, and ancient writing and art also reveals that ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans ate cucumbers. During the European Age of Discovery, Columbus is credited for taking cucumber to the Americas. Cucumbers are members of the Cucurbit family, and are related to squash (winter and summer), melons and gourds.

### FUN FACTS

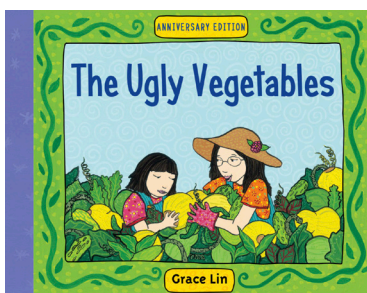
Cucumbers contain most of the vitamins a person needs for the entire day.

Mashed or sliced cucumber can provide relief for a sunburn (just like aloe vera!)

60 million tons of cucumbers are grown worldwide each year.

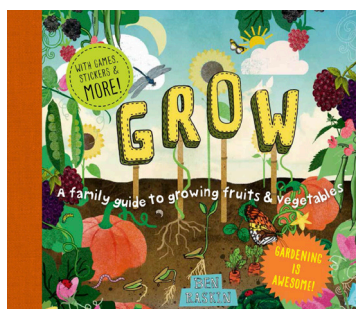
The inner temperature of a cucumber can be up to 20 degrees cooler than the outside air temperature.

### BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



Lin, Grace. The Ugly Vegetables. 2001.

Building upon his successful series of creative science for the younger grades, the author-illustrator of the LIFE AND TIMES series focuses on the science, uses and history of America's most prevalent crop. A master of fascinating trivia, he knows just how to draw readers in and expand on a seemingly small topic.

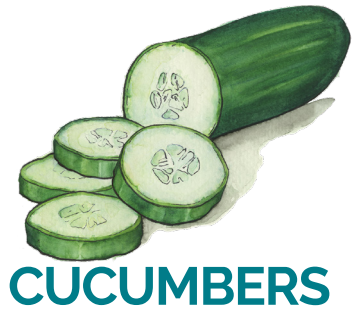


Raskin, Ben. Grow: A Family Guide to Growing Fruits and Vegetables. 2017.

Have you ever wondered how plants work? Or why we eat the fruit of one plant, but the leaves of another? What's the big deal about growing things—and how do we decide what we need to grow in the space we have? Discover the whole life cycle of food, from sowing and saving to planning and planting, and—most exciting of all—harvesting the food you've grown.

# PICKLING CUCUMBERS

Grades 3-5 • 30 minutes



## OBJECTIVES

Students understand the pickling process and work cooperatively with their team to make a batch of cucumber pickles.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Where does food come from?  
How are fresh foods preserved?

## MA STATE FRAMEWORK(S)

3rd - 5th Writing Standards

## MATERIALS

Sliced cucumbers  
Flavorings: cilantro, parsley, peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, garlic cloves  
Vinegar & Sugar  
Measuring spoons & cups  
6 jars  
Store bought dill and bread & butter pickles (optional)  
Pickle making worksheet (attached)

## PROCEDURE

### Introduction

Ask the class if they have ever grown/eaten pickles before. Ask them if they know how to make a pickle. Continue the discussion until you've explained that cucumbers are used to make pickles. (Optional) Have students try a store-bought pickle and describe the flavors. Compare bread and butter to dill pickles.

### Activity

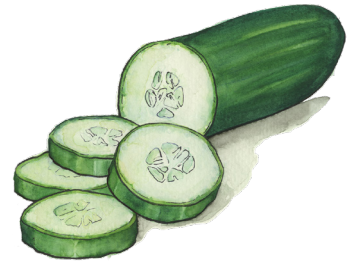
Divide the class into 6 groups, one group per pickle jar. Have students read the recipe together as a group and optionally call students to read it to the whole class. Begin by having the teachers heat the brine and explain that this dissolves the sugar and salt to ensure the cucumbers get preserved.

Then have students chop the cucumbers into the shape of their choosing. Now add the flavor ingredients and stuff the jar full of the cucumbers. Have an adult pour the semi-cooled brine over the cucumbers until the jar is almost full.

Have every student shake the jar for 20 seconds each (make sure the lid is secured tightly). Keep in the fridge for three days and try the pickles as a class.

# PICKLING CUCUMBERS

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## PROCEDURE, CONT.

### Wrap Up

Try pickles. What happened to the cucumbers? How do they taste?

What other vegetables can we pickle? Why would pickling be important for people who need to preserve foods?

Have students record the experience on the attached worksheet.

## PICKLE RECIPE

### Ingredients

- 3 c white vinegar
- 1 c sea salt
- 4 qt. water
- 3 pounds cucumbers
- 6 tsp peppercorns
- 6 hot pepper fresh or dried (whole)
- 6 clove garlic
- 6 bunches fresh dill

### Directions

Teacher: Bring water to a boil. Remove from heat and add vinegar and salt. Stir to dissolve and cool.

Student: Wash cucumbers and cut up. Cut into any shape and practice safe knife handling skills.

Teacher Wash 6-quart sized canning jars.

Student: Add 1/2 tsp peppercorns, one hot pepper, one clove garlic, and 1 bunch of dill to each jar. Have students decide what flavorings they like best.

Student: Pack cucumbers into jars tightly.

Teacher: Pour slightly cooled brine over cucumbers.

Student: Place lid on refrigerator dill pickles and set in the refrigerator for 3 days.

*Pickles last for about two weeks.*



