



ACTIVITY GUIDE GREENS

LEARN



Spinach

facts

- Spanish translation, spinach: *Las espinacas*; Swiss chard: *Las acelgas*
- Hmong translation: *Zaub Ntsuab*
- Greens are a category of leafy vegetables. Beet greens, spinach, and Swiss chard are greens that belong to the same family of plants.
- Bright Lights is a popular variety of Swiss chard with colorful and bright stems.
- Contrary to the name, Swiss chard did not come from Switzerland. Swiss chard originates from a wild version of the beet that naturally grew in the Mediterranean and it was named by a Swiss botanist.
- Spinach was the first frozen vegetable sold in North America.



Bright Lights
Swiss Chard

EAT



nutrition & seasonality

• Key nutrients:

Calcium - Builds strong bones and teeth.

Vitamin A - Keeps skin and bones healthy, resists and fights infection, and maintains good eyesight.

Vitamin C - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.

Potassium - Helps maintain normal blood pressure.

Vitamin K - Needed for blood clotting, preventing excessive bleeding.

- Fresh greens grown in Wisconsin are available from May through October.

TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

Taste test a few varieties of "super green" leafy vegetables. "Super green" refers to dark green vegetables that contain extra amounts of key nutrients like vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fiber. These dark green vegetables are important to eat often to grow and stay healthy. Try a variety of "super green" vegetables including spinach, Swiss chard, kale, collard greens, romaine lettuce, watercress, bok choy, and mustard greens. Encourage kids to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste the "super green" leafy vegetables. Ask which ones they like best.

— Adapted from: *Got Veggies? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum*



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FUN



activity: Leafy Green Mystery Bags

Objective: Kids will identify a variety of leafy green vegetables.

Supplies: Boxes with fitted lids, paper bags, or other non-see-through containers. A variety of leafy green vegetables (curly kale, spinach, Swiss chard, collard greens, Lacinato kale, or lettuce).

Procedure: First, make several mystery boxes out of cardboard boxes. Cut a hole in the side of the box, 4 inches in diameter, large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck. Instead of boxes, you can also use a small paper bag. Select a few different leafy greens and place one type in each mystery box/bag. One at a time, ask each kid to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. Ask each kid to quietly describe to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the leafy greens. Talk about the greens.

- Do the leaves feel thick or thin?
- Are they light or heavy?
- Are they soft or hard?

This activity can also be done with a variety of different vegetables. A fun variation is to choose a vegetable from each of the six plant parts (root, stem, leaves, flower, fruit, seed).

— Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Team Nutrition. USDA does not endorse any products, services, or organizations. Provided by FoodWise.

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: Share pictures of different leafy green vegetables. Ask kids to observe the leaves and note ways they are similar and different. Have kids guess the name of each vegetable.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ



books

- *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons
- *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French
- *Plants on My Plate* by Cathy Smith
- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
- *Sylvia's Spinach* by Katherine Pryor
- *Sneaky Spinach* by Alexis Schulze

GARDEN CONNECTION

planting

Greens are perfect for growing in school gardens! Growing greens in the fall is ideal because harvesting fits well with the academic calendar, but greens can be grown in the spring as well. Greens grown in the summer can taste bitter. Most greens (especially spinach) are quick growing, frost-tolerant, and generally easy to grow. Plant a variety of chard, spinach, and other greens to make a "salad garden". Plant seeds directly in the garden.

harvesting

Harvest spinach whenever the leaves are large enough to use, about 3-6 inches. Spinach is usually best if it is cut while young. Harvest chard while the leaves are young and tender or after they mature and are larger. Chard stems are edible too! Cut off outer leaves individually and let the inner leaves continue to grow for a future harvest.