

Mystery Seeds

Grade Level: Adaptable for 2-5
Total Lesson Time: 45 minutes



Lesson Overview

Spring is planting time, so we thought it was a good time for students to become familiar with a variety of seeds. Some of the seeds (pinto beans, squash seeds and sunflower seeds) are good to eat. Others grow and produce delicious food for us. Students gained experience planting and caring for radish seeds in the previous lesson. This lesson aims to expand students' knowledge of various seeds. It's also a fun exploratory activity that allows students to move around the classroom and use clues to identify seven different "Mystery Seeds." We purposely include some more familiar seeds and some that are more challenging to identify. As with all of our lessons, we use the themes of food and gardening, but incorporate important skill building and learning from core subject areas. Students will need to work and communicate effectively with a partner, follow detailed instructions, manage time well, and process information and observations in order to make an informed judgment.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Communicate effectively with team members (Language Arts C.4.1, C.4.2, C.4.3)
2. Interpret and develop descriptive vocabulary (Language Arts A.4.1, A.4.4, D.4.1, D.4.2)
3. Effectively interpret clues, conduct observations, and report findings (Language Arts F.4.1; Science C.4.1, C.4.2, C.4.3, C.4.4, C.4.7)

Materials

Food

- Wasabe Peas (*warning – spicy)
- Popcorn
- Juice and/or water
- Any other seed snack you wish to serve

Supplies

- Napkins for snack
- Cups for juice or water
- 7 varieties of seeds
- Magnifying containers and/or small clear plastic container for seeds
- Numbered cards to identify stations
- Glue (Wet white glue)
- Toothpicks
- "Name that Seed" worksheet (*Seed clues on the worksheet may need to be changed to describe the particular seeds you acquire.)

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REAP Food Group:
www.reapfoodgroup.org

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Preparation

1. Collect materials.
2. Purchase snack foods and drinks.
3. Set up seed stations in the classroom, each with a number (which will correspond with a number on the “Name that Seed” worksheet) and two containers of seeds. Put the tiny seeds in magnifying containers if they are available to you.

Procedure

Introduction

Tell students they will be learning about seeds, like the ones they planted in the previous lesson. Ask students to share some of what they know about seeds. What do seeds need to grow? Are some seeds edible? What are some examples? *Beans, corn, peas, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, and nuts.* Do all seeds look alike? How are they different? *Size, shape, texture, and color.* In this lesson, students will explore some of those differences. They will play a game called “Mystery Seeds” and it will be their job to use clues to identify seven different seeds.

Mystery Seed Game

Pass out the “Name that Seed” Worksheets. (The boxes next to the seed clues are for gluing seeds, not for checking once a station is complete.)

Students work in teams of two or three rotating through the seven seed stations working to identify the seeds.

Explain to students that they will start at one of the seven stations, each of which has a different mystery seed to explore. By observing the seed and using the clues provided on the worksheet, it is the students’ job to figure out the name of the seeds at each station. We found it helpful to review the vocabulary in the clues before starting.

- 1) Look at and feel the seeds.
- 2) Find the clue on the worksheet that describes the seed.
- 3) Write the name of the seed on the line that matches the station number. For example: If station #1 has what looks like a pea, write “pea” in the #1 blank at the top of the worksheet.

Give students about two minutes at each station before signaling that they should move to the next station. Depending on the age of your students, they may need to be told that from station #7 they go to station #1. Since students may be quite active and talking to teammates, we found turning out the lights to be an easy way to signal that it was time to move to the next station.

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Procedure

Review Answers and Discuss Observations

Each student should have glue and a toothpick for this next step.

When all students have completed the stations, reconvene as a class and ask students to share their answers. What did they observe at each station that led them to their answer? Does everyone in class agree or do others have different answers? Let students make their case for the answer they have and work toward a class consensus.

As the class reaches consensus, let them know if the answer is correct or ask leading questions until they come to the correct answer. Once everyone knows the right answer, hand out one seed to each student to glue in the box next to the correct seed name and clue on the worksheet. Toothpicks are helpful because only a tiny drop of glue is needed for most seeds.

Repeat this for each seed.

Snack

Students should put their glue away and wash their hands. Hand out napkins, snack foods, and juice or water. Ask students why they might be eating popcorn as snack with this lesson. Because popcorn comes from the seed of the corn plant, of course.

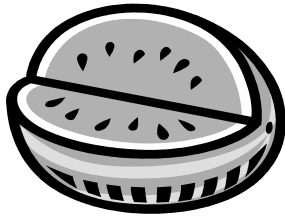
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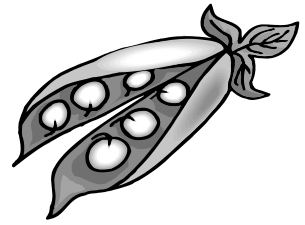
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Name That Seed



1. _____

5. _____

2. _____

6. _____

3. _____

7. _____

4. _____

Seed Clues

Squash = yellowish-white; big; looks like a rain drop

Carrot = brown; smallest seed in the room; looks like an arrow

Pinto Bean = light + dark brown swirled; oval-shaped

Tomato = gray; small; fuzzy; a flat circle

Pea = green + yellow; medium-sized; wrinkly; round like a ball

Sunflower = black + white striped; big; looks like an arrow

Radish = light brown; small; round like a ball