



Family Fun Page!!

Vegetable Beauty Contest

Not all vegetables turn out “picture perfect.” Tomatoes are a great example. Some are plump and round. Others grow into unusual shapes and sizes.

Many different things influence how produce grows - exposure to sun, pests, and even the environment. It’s actually a combination of these that make one tomato (or other veggie) “beautiful” while the one that grew next to it looks like an “ugly duckling.”

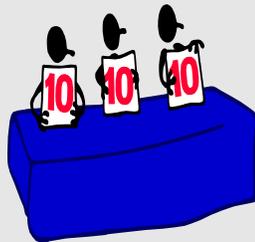
This is a silly way to familiarize your children with this concept of how the same type of vegetable can grow into somewhat varied shapes or appearances, yet still taste the same.

What you need:

4 of the same fresh vegetable (like tomatoes)

What you do:

- Explain to your children that their job is to look at the vegetables and rank them from 1st to 4th place. They can rate according to which is largest, best color, fewest blemishes, or best shape.
- Have your children pick up and examine each vegetable closely.
- Have your children rate it, on a scale of 1 to 5. As your children rank a vegetable, ask them to tell you why they picked one over another.
- Next, taste the different veggies with your children. Do they taste different, just because they look different?

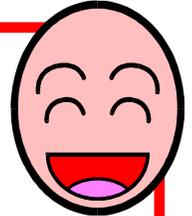


Q: What type of tables can we eat?

A: *Vege - tables!*

Q: Why did the cook throw tomatoes and lettuce around in the kitchen?

A: *She wanted a tossed salad!*

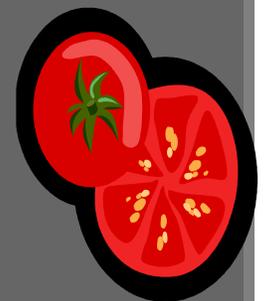


Kitchen Korner!

PAN-GRILLED TOMATO SLICES

- 1 1/2 pounds firm tomatoes
- 1/2 cup unseasoned dry bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped green onion (scallion)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided

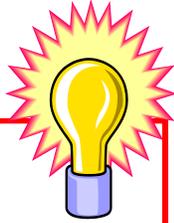
- Core & cut tomatoes in 1/2-inch slices.
- In a pie plate, combine bread crumbs, green onion, and spices.
- Place milk in a shallow bowl.
- Dip tomato slices in milk. Then, coat both sides with bread crumb mixture, shaking off excess.
- In a large nonstick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil until hot.
- Add tomato slices, a few at a time; cook over medium heat until golden, 2-4 minutes on each side, adding remaining 1 table-spoon oil when needed.



MAKE IT WITH THE KIDS!



Did you know...



New Jersey farmers grow more than 585,000 pounds of tomatoes every season. They grow slicing, plum, cherry, and grape tomatoes.

The tomato is the state vegetable of New Jersey.

“Jersey Fresh” tomatoes are available from July to October every year!

Vegetable Sorting Fun!

This is a fun way to teach your children about likes or differences by having them sort objects into two categories.

What you need:

Magazine pictures of different vegetables
Paste
Construction paper
Scissors



What you do:

- Discuss with your children how farmers are better able to grow some vegetables than others because of New Jersey’s special temperature or climate and soil. (These include tomatoes, sweet peppers, corn, and pole beans - both lima and string.) Meanwhile, some vegetables aren’t strong enough to grow well in New Jersey’s climate and soil to be profitable for farmers. (These include carrots, potatoes, and artichokes.)
- Show pictures of the different vegetables.
- Cut out an assortment of magazine pictures of various vegetables.
- Ask your children to sort the pictures according to those that grow in New Jersey and those that do not. **Use the NJ Seasonality Chart for help:** <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/pdf/njseasonalitychart.pdf>

TOMATO EXTRAVAGANZA!

Here’s a wonderful way to expose your children to the many different types of tomatoes that local farmers grow. (It’s an easy way to teach your “little ones” that there are many different varieties of familiar foods, too.)

Search online with your children or visit a farm market and see how many different types of tomatoes you can find. Look for “Beefsteak” tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, and plum tomatoes. Can you find others? Did you see all red tomatoes? Or, were you lucky enough to see a few green or yellow tomatoes?

Purchase a few different varieties of tomatoes and take them home for you and your children to taste together. Which were your favorites?

Tie in your tomato extravaganza to a new book. Read the book “Oliver’s Vegetables,” by Vivian French or “Growing Vegetable Soup,” by Lois Ehlert with your children to reinforce the importance of taking new and inquisitive vegetable adventures!

Purchase the books for your home book shelf, or read them online for free at these fun You Tube sites:

Oliver’s Vegetables by Vivian French

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhmqiEXe8dc>

Growing Vegetable Soup, by Lois Ehlert

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRDyнкCgAj4>)

