



LiveWell Kids

Garden and Nutrition Program

Lesson 5: Harvesting Cool-Season Crops

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Learn about cool-season vegetables and how they grow. (TK-5)
- Practice safe and proper harvesting and washing methods. (TK-5)
- Make connections between growing food and eating food that supports health. (TK-5)
- Participate in preparing a simple, healthy, garden-based dish. (TK-5)

SUPPLIES

- **Supplies to bring from the shed to the garden:**

For the Harvesting Station

- 2 Large bowls (move to Food Prep Station after washing produce)

For the Washing Station

- Hand soap
- Paper towels (move to Food Prep Station after washing produce)
- 2 colanders
- 1 vegetable scrubber
- 1 washing tub

For the Food Prep/Tasting Station

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ○ 3 small bowls | ○ Olive oil |
| ○ 2 large bowls | ○ Apple Cider vinegar |
| ○ Food handling gloves | ○ Ground ginger |
| ○ 1 or 2 cutting boards | ○ 1 apple |
| ○ 1 or 2 knives (for adult use only) | ○ Salt & pepper grinders |
| ○ Micro plane grater | ○ Plastic wrap |
| ○ Measuring spoons | ○ Large, clear, plastic storage bin |
| ○ 2 peelers | ○ Sanitizing wipes |
| ○ Whisk | ○ Paper food trays (1 per child) |
| ○ Large serving utensil for mixing | ○ Plastic forks (1 per child) |
| ○ Paper towels | ○ Folding table from shed (if applicable) |

- **Supplies to harvest from the garden – some items vary from garden to garden, so harvest what you have of:**
 - Peas
 - Kohlrabi
 - Carrots
 - Kale
 - Optional: other vegetables and herbs in the garden beds that you would like to add
- **Supplies to bring from classroom to garden - *arrange with the teacher ahead of time:***
 - Paper - one piece per student
 - Writing tools such as crayons, colored pencils, or markers

PREPARATION

- Refer to the [LiveWell Kids Volunteer Manual](#) on the [LiveWell Kids webpage](#) for details about preparing for the lesson one week prior and the day of.
- Since this lesson involves a tasting, allow sufficient time for set-up before students arrive.
- It is important to **check with the teacher ahead of time about students with allergies.** If an allergy exists, suggest that parents send a small amount of their own allergy-free dressing for their child's tasting sample. These are the ingredients you'll be using to make the dressing:
 - Olive oil
 - Apple Cider vinegar
 - Ground ginger
 - Apple
 - Salt & pepper

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

Supplies for each station are listed above.

This lesson includes three stations: Harvesting Station, Washing Station, Food Prep/Tasting Station.

- **SET UP THE HARVESTING STATION:**
 - Place the two large bowls near the garden bed where harvest will occur.
- **SET UP THE WASHING STATION:**
 - Place hand soap, paper towels and colanders on the sink.
 - Place washing tub on the ground near the sink and fill about 2/3 full of water.
 - Put the vegetable scrubber in the washing tub.
 - Leave adequate space for students to line up and move safely between washing tub and sink.
- **SET UP THE FOOD PREP/TASTING STATION:**
 - Use the picnic tables for this station.
 - Wipe down the large plastic storage bin with sanitizing wipes.
 - Place the paper towels, food trays, and forks inside the bin, with the lid on.
 - Set all food prep supplies at one end of the table where the volunteer will stand and prep the tasting.
 - Place paper and writing tools in the shed with easy access after tasting.



INTRODUCTION & MINDFUL BREATHING (1 Minute)

- Introduce yourself and any other volunteers.
- Guide students through a brief mindful breathing exercise.
- Explain that today’s lesson is about harvesting cool-season vegetables, learning how they grow, and tasting the food they planted.

Grade-Level Talking Points:

TK	Today we are gardeners. We will pick vegetables, wash them, and taste them together. Vegetables help our body grow strong and give us energy to play.
K	Plants give us food that helps our bodies grow strong. Vegetables have nutrients that help our bodies stay healthy.
1st	Plants have different parts, and each part has an important job. Different vegetables help different parts of our bodies.
2nd	Plants grow in different seasons and the vegetables they produce give our bodies important nutrients.
3rd	Plants have structures that help them survive and grow in their environment. The vegetables and fruit we eat provide fiber and vitamins that help our bodies work properly.
4th	Different plant parts have different functions that support growth and health. Whole vegetables support digestion, heart health, and steady energy.
5th	Growing and eating whole foods supports long-term health, while healthy ecosystems help make that food possible. Eating a variety of whole plant foods supports long-term health and helps prevent disease.

HARVESTING, WASHING AND PREPPING COOL-SEASON CROPS

This section has three parts:

1. Harvesting produce from the garden
2. Washing the produce
3. Preparing the produce to eat

Harvesting Station (TK - 2nd: approx. 7 minutes, 3rd - 5th: approx. 12 minutes)

<p>Harvesting Overview</p> <p><i>Supplies: You will use the large bowls for harvesting from your garden bed. Not all produce may be available so use what you have. If your bed is lacking, feel free to coordinate with other classes that may be abundant.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk the class through the garden to observe the plants growing in the beds. • Ask students if they remember what they planted earlier in the season. • Begin harvesting your garden bed. • Allow a few students at a time to harvest with guidance. • Allow each student to pick an item. If you have enough, then more.

- As each student harvests, direct them to the Washing Station.

Peas – Harvesting Instructions:

- Have students stand around a pea vine.
- Instruct them to hold the pea with one hand and use the other hand to “cut” the pea from the stem with their fingernail.
- Each student will also use their fingernails to “cut” a tendril.
 - **Do not attempt to pull the pea off the vine**, this may cause the branch to break!
- Leaves and stems may also be harvested.
 - If adding stems, use scissors to cut pieces of tender stem – they don’t tear/cut well with fingernails.

PLANT FACTS:

- Peas are legumes that grow seeds inside pods; botanically a fruit.
- All above-ground parts of the pea plant are edible.
- Pea plants help add nutrients to the soil.

Peas – Grade-Level Talking Points:

TK	Pea pods grow on vines.
K	Peas grow inside pods.
1 st	Peas are seeds.
2 nd	Seeds make new plants.
3 rd	Legumes help make the soil healthier for other plants.
4 th	Peas are part of the nutrient cycle in the garden because they work with helpful bacteria that make nitrogen available to plants.
5 th	Legumes support sustainable growing practices because they improve soil health naturally, by using their roots to form a partnership with nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the soil. In other words, they help the soil feed itself.

Carrots – Harvesting Instructions:

- To harvest a carrot, the students grasp the carrot greens close to the soil.
- Gently wiggle the carrot to loosen it before pulling upward.
- Since carrots are large, swollen roots, they have a firm hold in the soil. They will sometimes break off at the leaves, staying in the ground if they aren’t loosened enough before pulling up. If this happens, use a trowel to dig it out.

PLANT FACTS:

- Carrots are roots that grow underground.
- Roots store energy and absorb water and nutrients.
- Carrots contain nutrients that support eye health and help our bodies grow.

Carrots – Grade-Level Talking Points:

TK	Carrots grow under the soil.
K	The carrot IS the root.

1 st	Roots hold the plant in the ground.
2 nd	Roots take in water from the soil.
3 rd	Roots move nutrients through plants.
4 th	Roots store energy for growth.
5 th	Roots are part of plant transport systems; bringing water and nutrients into the plant.

Kale – Harvesting Instructions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest the outer leaves and leave the inner leaves alone so the plant can continue to grow. • Take hold of the leaf at the base, near the soil, and twist it until it snaps off the plant. <p>PLANT FACTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kale is a leaf vegetable. • Leaves use sunlight to make food for the plant. • Kale grows well in cool weather. • Leafy greens like kale provide vitamins that support bones and overall health.
--

Kale – Grade-Level Talking Points:

TK	Kale likes to grow in cooler weather, and if we pick the outside leaves to eat, the plant will keep growing.
K	Leaves help plants take in sunlight that they need to make food.
1 st	Leaves use sunlight, air and water to make food for the plant.
2 nd	Leaves help plants grow by making food.
3 rd	Photosynthesis is the process of leaves making food for the plant.
4 th	Photosynthesis supports food webs. Who remembers what ‘photosynthesis’ means?
5 th	Through photosynthesis, kale converts sunlight into energy that forms the base of food webs.

Kohlrabi – Harvesting Instructions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp the swollen stem, gently wiggle until you feel it’s loose, then pull upward. <p>PLANT FACTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is in the same family as kale and broccoli. • The stem stores nutrients for the plant. • Kohlrabi provides fiber and vitamin C that help support our digestion and immunity.

Kohlrabi – Grade-Level Talking Points:

TK	The part of the plant that we eat grows above ground and swells into a ball-shape.
----	--

K	Even though it looks like a root, the part of kohlrabi that we eat is actually a stem that's swollen.
1st	One of the jobs of a stem is to hold the plant up.
2nd	Some stems, like kohlrabi, store food for the plant.
3rd	Stems move water and nutrients through the plant.
4th	Some stems, like kohlrabi, are adapted to store energy.
5th	Kohlrabi's swollen stem is an adaptation that allows it to store energy and grow well in cool-season conditions.

Washing Station (*K – 2nd approx. 4 minutes, 3rd – 5th approx. 6 minutes.*)

*** Happening as an extension of the harvest activity.*

Washing Produce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a teacher or helper monitor this station, as a line will most likely form. • Students wash produce one at a time. • Above-ground produce may be rinsed by swishing in the water. • Underground produce may be gently scrubbed. • Washed produce is placed in colanders after washing to drain excess water. • TK talking point: "Washing our produce helps keep our food clean and safe." <p><i>As each student finishes washing, send them to the Food Prep/Tasting Station where they will be directed to sit at the tables to wait for the food prep demo.</i></p>

Food Prep/Tasting Station (*12 Minutes for K – 2nd, 18 minutes for 3rd – 5th*)

***As students arrive, they may be assigned simple helping tasks if age appropriate. Students must wash hands and wear food handling gloves if they are handling food items.*

Setting Up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put on the food handling gloves. • Wait to start the demo until all students are together at the Food Prep/Tasting Station, ready to listen. • Explain that you will now make <i>Garden Rainbow Slaw</i> using the produce they harvested. All produce scraps will go into a bowl for the composter.

RECIPE: Garden Rainbow Slaw Cups

This is served as a lightly dressed veggie slaw with peas mixed in. Complete recipe is at the end of the lesson plan.

SLAW INGREDIENTS AND PREPARATION:

- Kale - Finely shred the kale into very thin ribbons.

- Carrots - Shred the carrots.
- Kohlrabi - Slice kohlrabi very thinly into “matchsticks.”
- Peas - Shell the peas. Pea tendrils can go in the bowl “as is.”

“FRESH APPLE GARDEN DRESSING” INGREDIENTS:

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil, fresh apple (1 per class), apple cider vinegar, ginger, salt.
- **Optional** seasonings (choose only ONE, very lightly – too many flavors get “muddy”):
 - Black pepper (1-2 light turns of the grinder)
 - Fresh herbs from the garden if available (chopped very finely parsley, for example.)

DRESSING PREPARATION:

- Wash the apple thoroughly
- Using a microplane grater (adult only), grate the whole apple directly into a small bowl, including the peel.
- Add extra virgin olive oil.
- Add apple cider vinegar.
- Add ginger and salt.
- Whisk or stir well to combine and drizzle lightly over vegetables.
- Toss gently until just coated – do not overdress (use the large fork and spoon, or tongs.)

SERVING:

- Portion approximately 2 tablespoons of slaw into each paper food tray.
- Serve with a fork and paper towel.
- Remind students this is a ‘raw veggie slaw’, like coleslaw but made from garden-fresh vegetables.

TALKING POINT DURING PREP:

- TK – “We made crunchy veggie ribbons from the vegetables you grew.”
(*Learning concept: Transformation – vegetables change form when prepared for eating.*)
- K – “Shredding makes vegetables easier to chew.”
(*Learning concept: Structure affects function.*)
- 1st – “Cutting vegetables small helps mix flavors.”
(*Learning concept: Cause and effect – preparation changes how food tastes.*)
- 2nd – “Crunchy vegetables help keep our bodies strong.”
(*Learning concept: Structure and function – how food texture affects the body.*)
- 3rd – “Raw vegetables keep fiber intact, and that’s good for our digestion.”
(*Learning concept: Fiber aids digestion.*)
- 4th – “Fiber supports digestion and heart health.”
(*Learning concept: Body systems.*)
- 5th – Simple preparation preserves nutrients in whole foods.”
(*Learning concept: Nutrient preservation/food processing.*)

MINDFUL TASTING (TK - 2nd: approx. 5 minutes, 3rd - 5th: approx. 7 minutes)

- Review mindful tasting expectations:
- Be respectful with food.
- Avoid saying things like, “yuck”, or “gross.”
- Try at least one bite.
- Use all five senses.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What colors do you see?
- What do you smell?
- How does it feel in your mouth?
- Do you hear a crunch when you chew?

CLOSING (1 Minute)

- Bring students together and thank them for learning and gardening with you today, along with the teacher, and volunteers.
- Review what students learned about plants and food.
- Share one closing nutrition takeaway based on grade level:
 - TK – “Vegetables help our bodies grow big and strong.”
 - K – “Eating vegetables helps keep our bodies healthy.”
 - 1st – “Different vegetables help different parts of our bodies.”
 - 2nd – “Vegetables give our bodies energy and help us feel our best.”
 - 3rd – “Vegetables provide fiber and vitamins that help our bodies work properly.”
 - 4th – “Whole vegetables support digestion, heart health, and steady energy.”
 - 5th – “Eating a variety of whole plant foods supports long-term health and disease prevention.”
- Let students know they will plant new seeds in their next lesson.
- Have students dispose of plates and paper towels properly.
- If time allows, students may create a ‘Reflection Page’ when they return to class (confirm with teacher first.) If you see any that you’d like to share with BCHD, take photos of their work and email them to Mishell.balzer@bchd.org.
- Dismiss the class.

***Don’t forget to report your lesson as delivered with the online form!**

From your phone, scan this QR code below to report lessons as delivered. Once the page opens, select the ‘grid view’. From the computer, click the link [LiveWell Kids Tracking Links 2025-26](#)



GARDEN RAINBOW SLAW

Review the ingredients with your teacher in consideration of any food allergens.

This recipe is for a class of 35 students, served as a lightly dressed raw veggie slaw with peas mixed in.

Salad ingredients (use what you have of the following):

- 16 kale leaves
- 2 kohlrabi
- 6 carrots
- 2 cups of shelled peas
- 30 pea tendrils
- Optional: pea stems, carrot greens, or any other edible produce growing in your garden bed

Dressing Ingredients:

- 4 Tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- A very small pinch of ground ginger
- 1 ½ teaspoon of apple cider vinegar
- 6-7 **light** grinds of the salt grinder (just enough to brighten flavor – do not oversalt)
- 1 apple (used whole, including the peel, not the core)
- OPTIONAL, choose one: 1-2 light turns of the pepper grinder OR finely diced fresh herbs from the garden (i.e. parsley)

Directions:

- Kale - Finely shred the kale into very thin ribbons, then massage for 2 minutes.
- Carrots - Shred the carrots.
- Kohlrabi - Slice kohlrabi very thinly into “matchsticks.”
- Peas - Shell the peas. Pea tendrils can go in the bowl “as is.”

Dressing:

- Wash the apple thoroughly.
- Using a microplane grater, grate the whole apple directly into a small bowl, including the peel. Let sit for 1-2 minutes to release juices.
- Add extra virgin olive oil.
- Add apple cider vinegar.
- Add ginger.
- Add salt.
- Whisk or stir well to combine and drizzle lightly over vegetables.
- Toss gently until just coated – do not overdress (use the large fork and spoon, or tongs.)

Serve:

- Portion approximately 2 tablespoons of slaw into each paper food tray.
- Serve with a fork and paper towel.
- Remind students this is a ‘raw veggie slaw’, like coleslaw but made from garden-fresh vegetables.