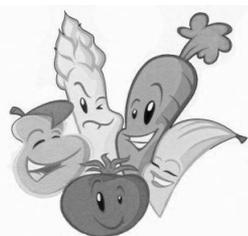


A STEM in the Park Take Home Activity

STEM

in the PARK

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics



Nature Detectives

The Case of the Mystery Produce

What You Need

- The Mystery Produce Cards below
- A grocery store or market with a good supply of produce

What To Do

- Cut the mystery cards into separate pieces and keep them in your purse or wallet.
- Each time you visit the produce section with your children, pull out a mystery card.
- Read (or have your kids read) the mystery clues and solve the mystery.
- When you've used them all, have the kids make up their own for you or their siblings to try to solve!

I am yellow/orange.
I am the size of a ping pong ball.
I have fuzzy skin.
I am sweet.
I have one large seed.

I am an apricot and I am the fruit of the apricot tree.

I am dark purple.
I am shaped like an oval.
My skin is shiny.
I am firm but soft when you press on my skin.

I am an eggplant and I am the fruit of the eggplant.

I am green.
I look like a large soft ball.
I am firm and heavy.
I have many thin layers wrapped in a tight ball.

I am a cabbage and I am the leaf of the cabbage plant.

I am dark red.
I have little green leaves sprouting from the top of me.
I'm bigger than a marble but smaller than a ping pong ball.

I am a radish. I am the root of the radish plant and grow underground.

Continued on back

Observe...

As your children are making their way through the produce section, interject occasional questions and comments such as; Describe what you see. Find and identify as many parts of plants as possible. Can you see the seed portion? Does it have an odor? Is it colorful? Does it look tasty?

Learn...

Many children and adults do not realize what part of the plant they are eating when they buy pieces of produce. For example, fruits are the seed bearing portion of a plant. When we eat a green pepper or a cucumber we are eating a fruit not a vegetable, as we often assume. Vegetables are the edible parts of a plant that do not bear the seeds. Lettuces therefore are the leaves of plants, carrots the roots, and celery the stem.

Investigate...

The next step in helping your children appreciate the role of plants in their diet is to take this mystery activity into processed foods. Start asking questions about the foods they eat each day. Where does peanut butter come from and what part of the plant are they eating?

How about that chocolate cake they had for dessert? Dissecting these foods can teach children about recipes and ingredients and measurements, as well as further their understanding of botany.



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