



**Foods of the Month**  
**Fun, Experiential Activities**

# **Fresh Herbs & Spices**

## **Grades K-2**



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### Fun Ways to COOK WITH HERBS

#### Salads

sage, lemon balm, violets, mint, anise hyssop, nasturtiums, borage flowers, rosemary

#### Soups, Stews and Sauces

curry, cumin, rosemary, thyme, oregano, nettles, calendula, alfalfa and dandelion

#### Ice Cream

lavender, rose petals, lemon balm, mint

#### Edible Decorations

pansies, violets, borage flowers, nasturtiums, chives and the tiny flowers of rosemary, sage and lavender

#### Hot Chocolate

ginger, cinnamon and cardamom

#### Lemonade

Lavender, ginger, rose petal

#### Baking

cinnamon, ginger, cloves, allspice, nutmeg, cardamom, rosemary, sage, oregano, thyme and even lavender

#### Dips

cilantro, basil, chives, parsley

#### Smoothies and Popsicles

chamomile, lemon balm, mint, hibiscus and elderberry

#### Hot Apple Cider

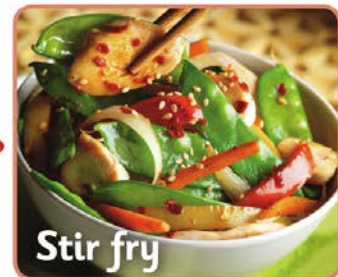
cinnamon, ginger, cloves, allspice and orange peel

#### Infusions

lemon balm, mint, elderberry, rose, chamomile, lycium berry, nettle, oatstraw, hibiscus, violet, and calendula



Can you label the spices correctly?



cinnamon

vanilla

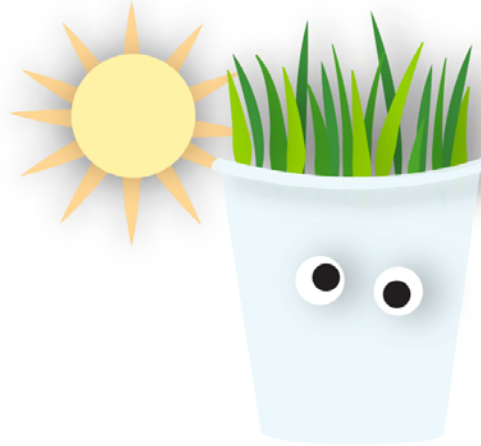
chilli flakes

ginger

### Mr. Herb Head

#### Collect:

- Plastic Cup
- Scissors
- Nylon pantyhose or tights
- Soil
- Herb seeds - try chive, lavender, or chia seeds
- Decorations (googly eyes, pom-poms, foam stickers)



#### Prep your planter

1. Take an old pair of nylon pantyhose or tights and cut the end off around the knee. Keep the part with the enclosed toe and dispose of the rest.
2. Stretch the open part of the pantyhose around the lip of the cup so that the toe end hangs into the cup. This will hold the pantyhose open.

#### Plant your seeds.

3. Sprinkle a teaspoon of seeds into the toe end. Fill the rest of the pantyhose with dirt until you reach the top of the cup.
4. Pull the pantyhose off of the cup. Press the dirt down into the toe of the pantyhose to form a firm ball and tie it off by making a knot close to the dirt with the remaining material. Trim off the excess a couple inches from the knot.
5. Turn the plastic cup into a holder by placing your herb head inside with the seed part facing up and the knot side touching the bottom of the cup.
6. Cut around the top of the cup so that your herb head sticks out above the rim.
7. Soak your herb head so that it is thoroughly wet, but not muddy.
8. Decorate your herb head!

#### Take care of your herb head!

9. Place your herb head in a nice sunny spot.
10. Keep a little water at the bottom of the cup at all times, and sprinkle the top of the herb head every day with a little bit of water. It will take up to a week to start growing.
11. Observe how the seeds sprout and grow. Give your herb head a hair cut if you want to use edible sprouts in a food dish!

#### How does it work?

Seeds need water, light, and soil to germinate and grow. Without all of these, seeds stay dormant and do not grow. Most of the herb head's water comes from the bottom of the cup. The excess pantyhose touches the water and acts as a wick to pull the water up into the soil.

### Fragrant Spices - spicy fact cards

LESSON ACTIVITY Age group: 7 - 11 years

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**Farm to Fork**  
— Online Field Trips —

Cut along dotted lines

### Ginger



Originates from Southern China

What part of the plant is it?	Root
What does it look like?	Pale brown and knobbly
Example dish which includes it	Gingerbread
What does it taste like?	Pungent and tangy
Fun fact	The ginger plant produces pink buds and yellow flowers

### Turmeric



Originates from South Western India

What part of the plant is it?	Root
What does it look like?	A stubby yellow carrot
Example dish which includes it	Lamb tagine
What does it taste like?	Like bitter oranges
Fun fact	Turmeric is used to add extra colour to mustard products

### Galangal



Originates from Indonesia

What part of the plant is it?	Root
What does it look like?	Like ginger, but whiter & shinier
Example dish which includes it	Tom Yum soup
What does it taste like?	Like ginger, but hotter
Fun fact	Galangal looks like ginger but is much spicier

### Liquorice



Originates from Southern Europe

What part of the plant is it?	Root
What does it look like?	Greyish wooden sticks
Example dish which includes it	Pontefract cakes
What does it taste like?	Bitter and salty
Fun fact	In some countries raw liquorice root is chewed as a breath freshener

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### Horseradish



Originates from South Eastern Europe

What part of the plant is it?	Root
What does it look like?	A thick white carrot
Example dish which includes it	Horseradish sauce and roast beef
What does it taste like?	Hot and peppery
Fun fact	Horseradish root has no smell, it only smells when you grate or crush it

### Black Pepper



Originates from Southern India

What part of the plant is it?	Fruit
What does it look like?	Small, round pellets
Example dish which includes it	Pepper steak
What does it taste like?	Smoky and woody
Fun fact	Pepper is the most widely used spice in the world

### Cardamom



Originates from Southern Asia

What part of the plant is it?	Fruit or seeds
What does it look like?	Green, triangular pods and small black seeds
Example dish which includes it	Masala curry
What does it taste like?	Cool and smoky
Fun fact	Cardamom is known as the "queen of spices"

### Nutmeg



Originates from Indonesia

What part of the plant is it?	Fruit
What does it look like?	A round nut
Example dish which includes it	Pumpkin pie
What does it taste like?	Sweet and nutty
Fun fact	Nutmeg is sometimes used as an ingredient in toothpaste

**Fragrant Spices - spicy fact cards**

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**Mace**



Originates from Indonesia

What part of the plant is it?	Fruit
What does it look like?	Red string
Example dish which includes it	Doughnuts
What does it taste like?	Fruity and flowery
Fun fact	Mace is the peel from nutmeg

**Vanilla**



Originates from Central America

What part of the plant is it?	Fruit
What does it look like?	Long, thin, black pods
Example dish which includes it	Ice cream
What does it taste like?	Smooth and smoky
Fun fact	Vanilla was not brought to the UK until the 1600's

**Saffron**



Originates from South West Asia

What part of the plant is it?	Part of the flower
What does it look like?	Delicate red strands
Example dish which includes it	Saffron risotto
What does it taste like?	Grassy honey
Fun fact	Saffron is the most expensive spice in the world

**Cloves**



Originate from Indonesia

What part of the plant is it?	Flower
What does it look like?	A very small torch
Example dish which includes it	Pilau rice
What does it taste like?	Warm and sweet
Fun fact	Cloves are flower buds from a tree

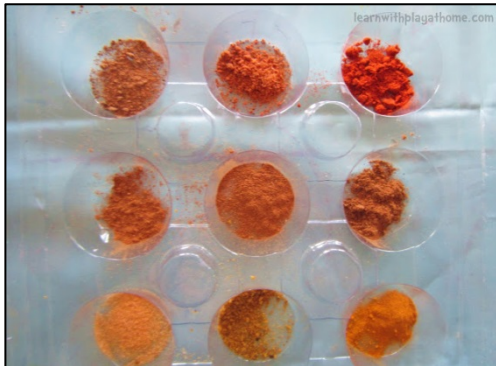
## “Spicy” Painting

**Materials:** Spices & Seasonings, water, paintbrush, containers for paint, paper

**Directions:**

Before adding any water to the seasoning and spices, let the children smell them all and talk about what they could smell.

1. Put a small amount of each powder into containers.



**Spices/seasonings pictured here are:**

Top left across: Nutmeg, Tandoori Seasoning & Smoked Paprika  
Middle row from left: Mixed Spice, Ground Cinnamon & Chinese Five Spice  
Bottom row from left: Chicken Salt, Moroccan Seasoning & Turmeric

2. Mix a small amount of water into each (less water gives stronger colors)
3. You're ready to paint!

Talk about any different textures you see. Some dissolve well and others are still a little grainy.



**Handy Tips:**

- **Simplify** this for younger children by letting them paint with their fingers. Just ensure that none of the seasonings or spices are too hot or spicy in case your little one just has to have a taste. You will also need to make sure they don't rub any in their eyes.

- **Extend** this by challenging older kids to try to match the made up seasoning/spice paint to the original dried seasoning/spice.

Adapted from: <http://www.learnwithplayathome.com/2012/08/painting-with-seasoning-and-spices.html>





**Foods of the Month**  
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# **Salad Greens**

## **Grades K-2**



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### Grow Your Own Salad!

Celebrate **National Garden Month** with a fun way to try a Food of the Month - Salad Greens!

#### Materials:

- Seeds (quick-growing greens like arugula)
- Growing containers (recycle household containers)
- Potting soil
- Window that gets a lot of sunshine!

#### Instructions:

1. Translucent clamshell boxes used to package gourmet salad greens make ideal containers for growing lettuce indoors. To get the boxes ready for duty, use the tip of a stout knife to make 8 or 9 gashes in the bottom of each one (adults only, please).
2. Have the students add 2 inches of moist potting soil before planting a pinch (about 25) of lettuce seeds, barely covering them with soil. Because the seeds greens are so small, you may want to help young children with this step.
3. Generously spritz the surface with water from a pump-spray bottle and put on the container tops. (Consider putting something under your garden in case water runs through the holes in the bottom – but it shouldn't, really, since you are suppose to spritz the surface, not pour water on it.)
4. Place the containers in your window and keep the seeds and soil moist. Make sure to rotate the pots every couple of days since one side of the plants will be getting more light exposure.
5. Five days later, when the seeds are up and growing, remove the container tops and place them under the boxes, so they become watering trays. The soil usually stays nicely moist if you fill the trays with water every day. The soil will absorb the water from the trays through the slits in the bottom of the container.
6. It should be time to start harvesting in 3 to 4 weeks (leaves should be a few inches tall). Remind your young gardeners that you won't be growing full heads of lettuce like the ones you buy at the store. The idea is to harvest a few leaves at a time from each plant and then let them grow again. That way, the plants won't take up too much space and you'll get multiple harvests.
7. Harvesting is easy. Using scissors simply cut the greens 1 inch above the soil line, leaving a few larger leaves in the center to keep plants healthy. By holding the boxes sideways, you can clip the leaves right into a colander. Lettuce, spinach and mesclun greens will grow back to yield another harvest in a couple of weeks. After a few harvests the plant stems may get thick and the leaves may remain small. This indicates it's time to compost the potting mix and roots, and start over.
8. Depending on the size and number of containers planted, your harvest may continue for many weeks.
9. For fun, purchase a package of store-bought greens and do a blind taste test against your homegrown greens. See if your young gardeners can tell the two apart.



## “Lettuce” Paint!

### Materials:

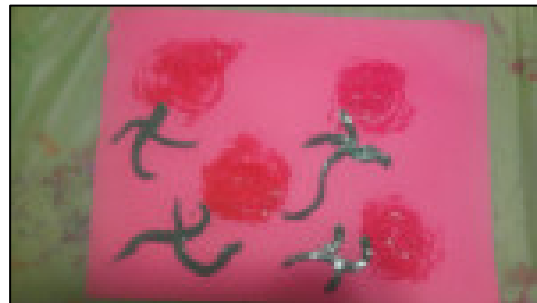
Romaine or iceberg lettuce, paper plates, paints, paintbrushes, paper

### Directions:

Trim the end off of romaine lettuce, cut about 3 inches from the end. Or cut a head of iceberg lettuce in half. You will use these parts to make the flowers/design. Put paint colors of your choice on paper plate. Either use a paintbrush to put the paint on the lettuce, or dip the lettuce in paint, making sure not to get too much on.

Stamp flowers or designs on your paper. If you rinse off the lettuce right away, you can use the same stump for different colors. Try twisting the lettuce for different effects. You can also make smaller flowers by removing a layer. Or use a single piece of lettuce dipped in paint to make different, free-hand designs, or for the stems and leaves.

Make a banner for the classroom or think ahead to Mother’s Day and make cards!





## Foods of the Month Experiential Activities

### April is National Garden Month!

Thirty years ago, the National Garden Bureau worked with 23 co-sponsoring national horticultural organizations to legislate *National Garden Week*. Former President Ronald Reagan signed the Proclamation on April 18, 1986, creating National Garden Week. It was then first celebrated the following year on April 12-18, 1987.

In 2002, the National Gardening Association wanted and worked to extend the celebration to encompass the entire month of April. National Garden Month was celebrated for the first time in 2003.

Now, every April communities, organizations, and individuals nationwide celebrate gardening during National Garden Month. Gardeners know, and research confirms, that nurturing plants is good for us: attitudes toward health and nutrition improve, kids perform better at school, and community spirit grows. Join the celebration and help to make America a greener, healthier, more livable place!

Visit [www.nationalgardenmonth.org](http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org) for celebration ideas, educational activities, projects, gardening tips and a list of gardening events in your area.

Source: <http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org/>





## Foods of the Month Experiential Activities

### Ripening Science

#### Materials:

- Lettuce leaves
- Apple
- Two brown paper bags

#### Directions:

- Take some lettuce leaves and place them in two brown paper bags. Add an apple to one bag. Leave them at least 24 hours.
- Before opening the bags, have students predict what might have occurred in each bag.
- What happened to the lettuce with and without an apple?
- Older students can research fruit and vegetable ripening and determine the best way to store leafy greens based on the results.

Adapted from: <https://georgiaorganics.org/lettucetryit/lessons>



National Recreation  
and Park Association

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