



## Colors & Harvesting

### INTRODUCTION

A scavenger hunt for ripe vegetables is an active and useful way to engage students in the school garden, learn about colors and size, and understand harvesting. This activity focuses on exploring the school garden and identifying what ripe vegetables can look like. Students will work in small groups to identify ripe vegetables and then practice harvesting the ripe vegetables.

### KEY CONCEPTS

- Learning colors
- Understanding shape and size
- Problem-solving to determine ripeness
- Understanding difference

### WHAT DOES “RIPE” MEAN?

Ripe is the way that we describe food that is ready for us to eat. Unripe is the opposite of ripe. When we say something is ripe, that means that it will taste as yummy as it is supposed to taste. For example, ripe fruits generally taste sweet and unripe fruits can taste sour or bland (like cardboard). We use our senses (sight, touch, and even sound) to determine what is ripe.

\* Although some ripe fruits (like lemons and limes) are naturally sour.

### WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

Practice learning the colors you will be seeing today: green, red, orange, etc. Use the provided example images to demonstrate what ripe can look like.



Ask students if they can name a time they tried a fruit or vegetable that wasn't ripe (sour blueberry, bland peach, green tomato, etc.). Did they like that food item?

Discuss whether students have helped their parents or guardians pick fruits and vegetables in the supermarket. How did they pick them? Were they looking at the color? Did they squeeze it? Prompt with stories of your own visits to the supermarket. Highlight the different senses you use, such as sight with tomatoes, sound with melons, or touch with stone fruit like peaches or plums.

## **MATERIALS**

- *Optional:* Basket to collect ripe fruits and vegetables to try and/or use in other activities.

## **ACTIVITY**

### *Preparation*

Go to the school garden to determine what garden beds have ripe and unripe vegetables. Each group should have both unripe and ripe examples in their garden bed.

### *In Class*

Assign small groups (5-6 students per group - ideally, an adult should be with each group). Bring the students into the school garden. Assign each group of students to a garden bed.

With the students, identify what color and size the vegetable should be if it is ripe. Ask them why they think what vegetables are ripe or unripe (color, size, touch, etc.)

Demonstrate the harvesting of each vegetable and then have students try harvesting the vegetable themselves. Ask students to come back together and share what they found that was ripe (what they harvested) and what was unripe.



## VARIATIONS

- For the warm-up activity, bring in an unripe and ripe version of the same fruit or vegetable (i.e. tomato, strawberry, peach). Ask students to pass these around and try to describe the differences. What color are they? Is one mushier feeling than the other when you squeeze it?
- Repeat this activity multiple times depending on the school garden yield and harvest times. Depending on your school garden, you may even decide to focus on one fruit/vegetable per visit (i.e. tomatoes, green beans, etc.)