

Fabulous Food Phantom

*A lesson from the New Jersey Agricultural Society
Learning Through Gardening Program*

Overview: Finish your discussion of plant parts and the ones we eat by giving students a chance to make their own Fabulous Food Phantom - a creature made up entirely of parts of plants we eat. Use your students' new knowledge of plant parts to create their own phantom plant character and to review what they've learned.

Objectives: The student will be able to:

- Identify the six basic plant parts - roots, stems, leaves, fruits, flowers, and seeds.
- Describe how humans eat different parts of different plants.
- Create a character made up of edible parts of plants, using all six basic plant parts.

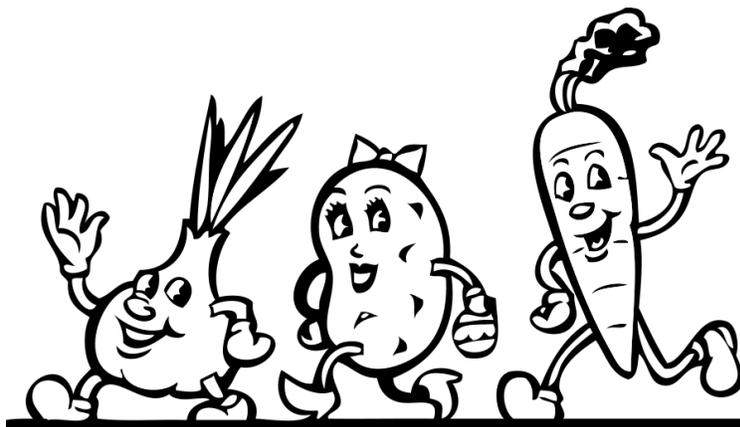
Materials:

Chart paper to make chart of plant parts that we eat

Colored paper, colored pencils, crayons, markers

Optional: copies of seed catalogs

Copy of The Fabulous Food Phantom story



Background Information

Here is a chart of edible plant parts that you may wish to use in this activity:

Roots

carrot
onion
radish
ginger
beets
sweet potato
turnip

Stems

celery
rhubarb
kohlrabi
asparagus
broccoli*
bok choy*

Flowers

broccoli*
cauliflower
artichoke
zucchini*
capers

Leaves

lettuce
bok choy*
spinach
cabbage
kale
Swiss chard
parsley
mint

Fruits

tomato
apple
eggplant
grapes
banana
pumpkin*
zucchini*
peach
pepper

Seeds

corn
rice
beans
coconut
pumpkin*
sunflower
peas

*These foods fit into more than one category.

NOTE: A potato is not a root. It is an underground stem, called a tuber.

Procedure

1. With the whole class, create a chart of plant parts we eat, brainstorming edible roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, and seeds. Display the chart during the rest of the lesson.
2. Read the story "The Fabulous Food Phantom" aloud to your students. Have the students assist you in filling in the blanks of the story.
3. Pass out a blank sheet of paper (as big as you wish) and ask the students to create their own Fabulous Food Phantom. The phantom can be a human, animal, or fictional creature. Remind students that their creature must have all six basic plant parts represented and that each part must be edible. Students can draw or color their phantom, use cut out pictures from seed catalogs, or both.
4. Allow students time to show their Food Phantoms to the class and explain the plant parts used.

Evaluation:

Completed food phantom.

Extension:

Read Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert. Ask your class to create a vegetable soup that uses at least one of each of the basic plant parts, then make and eat the soup in the classroom.

The Fabulous Food Phantom

Farmers Ben and Kathy Wishwell lived in New Jersey and grew all kinds of fruits and vegetables. They grew corn, tomatoes, peaches, green peppers, and strawberries. Like many farmers in New Jersey, the Wishwells grew more than one type of food. More than 100 fruits and vegetables are grown in New Jersey.

This particular summer, the Wishwells were having a difficult time, because the weather was not cooperating and did not provide enough rain. Crops all over New Jersey were suffering because there was not enough water for the plants.

One day, as Kathy was out in the peach orchard deciding whether or not the peaches were ready to be picked, she thought she heard a little voice say, "I wish I could help you."

She said to herself, "I've been worrying about these peaches too much lately. I'm beginning to imagine someone offering to help... I couldn't have heard anything."

Just then, one of the peaches rubbed against Kathy's leg and said, "I WISH that I could help you." Kathy shook her head and looked down. The only thing she saw was a peach that had been knocked to the ground by the wind. She picked up the peach and walked back to her house to get a cold drink.

As she walked back, she felt as if something was following her. Kathy looked around, but saw nothing. It sounded as if something was shuffling behind her. "It must be the rustling of the leaves," Kathy said to herself.

Once again, Kathy started back to the house, and again, she heard the shuffling sound. Kathy walked faster to the house. She finally reached the kitchen and poured herself a large cold glass of water. She put her feet up and closed her eyes.

Kathy heard a soft voice say again, "I wish I could help you." She opened her eyes and what she saw really startled her. The creature was made entirely out of edible plant parts! The face of this creature looked just like a peach. Its arms were made of _____, its fingers and toes were made of _____, and its eyes looked like seeds of _____. This was the most delicious-looking creature Kathy had ever seen.

Kathy asked in a very soft voice, "What is your name?"

It said, "I am the Fabulous Food Phantom. I help farmers while they work in their fields and orchards. You have been worrying about how things are going."

Kathy replied, "You're right. I have been worrying too much. But you look so delicious that for a moment, I forgot about how hard it is to farm."

The Fabulous Food Phantom said, "I'd like to help all farmers. I dream about helping farmers feed all the people of the world, even during drought. In my dreams, there will be enough food for everyone, and enough water for the crops. Please take my seeds and plant them in your fields. When new plants grow, they will look similar to me. Every part of the new plants will be edible."

Just then, Kathy opened her eyes, "Wow! That was some dream I had. Wait until I tell Ben when he comes home from town!" She rubbed her eyes and began to take another sip of water. Right beside her glass was a large juicy peach and a small bowl of glistening seeds.

