

April

..... HARVEST OF THE MONTH

ROMAINE LETTUCE

NC Standard Course of Study

Science:

3.L.2 Understand how plants survive in their environments.

4.L.2 Understand food and the benefits of vitamins, minerals and exercise.

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Writing Utensils
- Empty Plate Worksheets

Goal:

Students will explore the benefits of romaine lettuce and learn about plant parts and their functions and edible examples of roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds.



Activity Length:

Flexible. 45 minutes ideal



Location:

Classroom

Lettuce Life Cycle

Pass out “Lettuce Life Cycle” handouts and ask students to follow along as you read the script. (Alternatively, students can practice reading and take turns read the different steps of the life cycle.)

- Before it grows into a plant, what does lettuce start out as? **Seeds.**
- What does lettuce need to grow? **Sun, Soil, Water, and Air.**
- If we plant a lettuce seed in soil and give it water, after a few days it will start to grow **roots.**
- **Roots** provide a support system for the lettuce plant. They draw water up from the soil along with nutrients like potassium and iron to help the lettuce plant grow big and strong. **Roots** also keep the seedling in the ground and help it grow upright.
- After growing roots, the lettuce seed will “germinate”, meaning it sends up a **stem and leaves.** These are the first parts of the plant that we can see above ground.
- What are the main role of **leaves? Photosynthesis!** The leaves collect energy from the sun. The lettuce plant uses this energy to create food for itself.
- This is the point where the farmers harvest the lettuce. The **leaves** of the lettuce plant are the part we eat!
- When the lettuce plant is ready to make new plants, it will grow small **flowers.** In the life cycle of leafy greens such as lettuce, this step is called **bolting.**
- Inside each flower are several more **seeds.**
- Each one of the new seeds has the potential to create another plant and begin the cycle all over again!

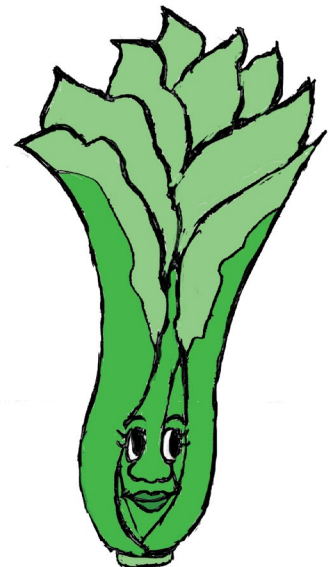
Supply Chain

Watch the video “Farm to Fork with Mr. Food”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkGbcMdvVVQ>

Ask students to identify the different steps of the supply chain as seen in the video, arriving at the five main steps:

- Plant: The farmer had to plant the seeds or seedlings
- Harvest: The farmer and his or her employees harvest the produce
- Transport: A driver had to drive them from farm to the store, market or processing facility
- Prepare: Someone (a processing facility, chef, family member) has to wash and prepare the food
- Eat: Finally, after all that work, YOU get to eat it!



Harvest of the Month Moment!



Before diving into the lesson, introduce the featured produce!

If space, gather in a circle or around the poster. Feel free to use this space to share your own experiences with the harvest and celebrate what students know.

The Harvest of the Month for APRIL is LETTUCE!

- *This leafy green loves the warm weather in April and May.*
- *Romaine Lettuce is a great source of the Vitamin A, which helps with eyesight and growth & development.*

Ask students to find the harvest on the What's Growing On? Poster. If available, pass around the harvest and invite students to share observations (*How does it feel, look, smell, sound? Does it remind you of another harvest we've done this year?*).

Consider asking some warm-up questions for students:

Have you tried it? When did you try it?

How does your family like to prepare this fruit/vegetable?

Do you have anything that you know about this harvest that you'd like to share?

What's Growing On?



Earth Day Activity

This month we celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd!

Earth Day is a day where we demonstrate support for environmental protection

One way to protect the environment is to reduce how much food waste we create

Ask students, *do you ever throw away some of your food at lunchtime? Does your family throw away food at home? How much?*

- Roughly 1.3 billion tons of food around the world are wasted every year!

What are some things we can do with our food instead of throwing it away? (compost, make vegetable stock, regrow food from some scraps)

- Make an Earth Day poster to hang in your hallway or classroom with all the ways your class wants to reduce food waste!

1. Introduction to Plant Parts

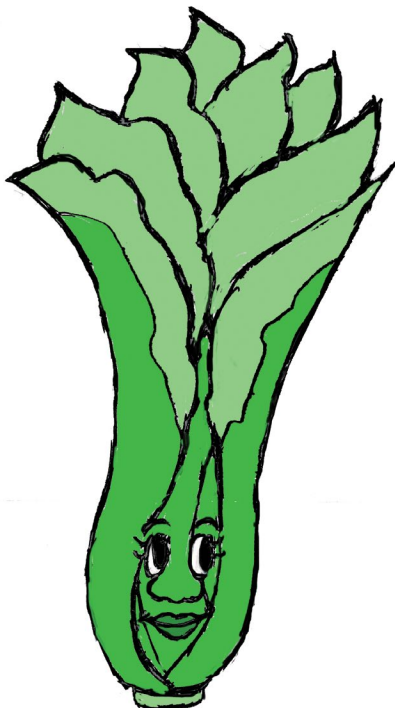
Hands in the air: how many main plant parts do you think there are? This is a silent vote. Four? Two? Ten?

- Let's count them out!

Invite responses and draw a basic plant on the board, adding a section with each response. Ask, *what part of the plant grows out under the ground? (ROOTS)*. *What part grows straight up from the ground? (STEM)*, etc.

1. Roots
2. Stem
3. Leaves
4. Flower
5. Fruit
6. Seed

- There are 6 main plant parts!
- Ask, *April's Harvest of the Month is LETTUCE*. *What part of the lettuce plant do we eat? (LEAVES)*.



2. Plant Parts & Functions

Name each plant part. Ask students if they remember the function of each plant part mentioned in the song. Go over the functions of each part together:

- **Roots:** reach down in the soil to soak up water and nutrients (like a straw in a glass of water)
- **Stems:** carries the sugar to the rest of the plant (like an elevator bringing the water and sugars up and down)
- **Leaves:** collect the sunlight that the plant turns into energy for itself
- **Flowers:** Attract pollinators like bees, birds, and insects. Flowers have pollen that is collected by pollinators and spread to other plants
- **Fruits:** Contain seeds. Spreads the seeds around (like when they fall on the ground) so new plants can grow.
- **Seeds:** Every new plant grows from them!

3. Edible Plant Parts

Ask students if they have eaten different plant parts. If they don't think so, brainstorm examples together.

- *Have you ever eaten a root before? No? Raise your hand if you've ever eaten a carrot before.*
- *Well, then you've eaten a root!*
- Brainstorm other "root" examples together (potatoes, radishes, turnips)
- Repeat for other plant parts. See list below for examples.

Fruits Tomatoes Apples Grapes Bell Peppers Cucumbers Berries Clementines	Seeds Sunflower Pumpkin Pomegranate Beans	Roots Carrots Parsnips Beets Radishes
Stems Celery Asparagus Scallions	Leaves Cabbage Kale Romaine Lettuce	Flowers Broccoli Cauliflower Violets Chamomile Squash Blossoms

4. Plant Parts Worksheet

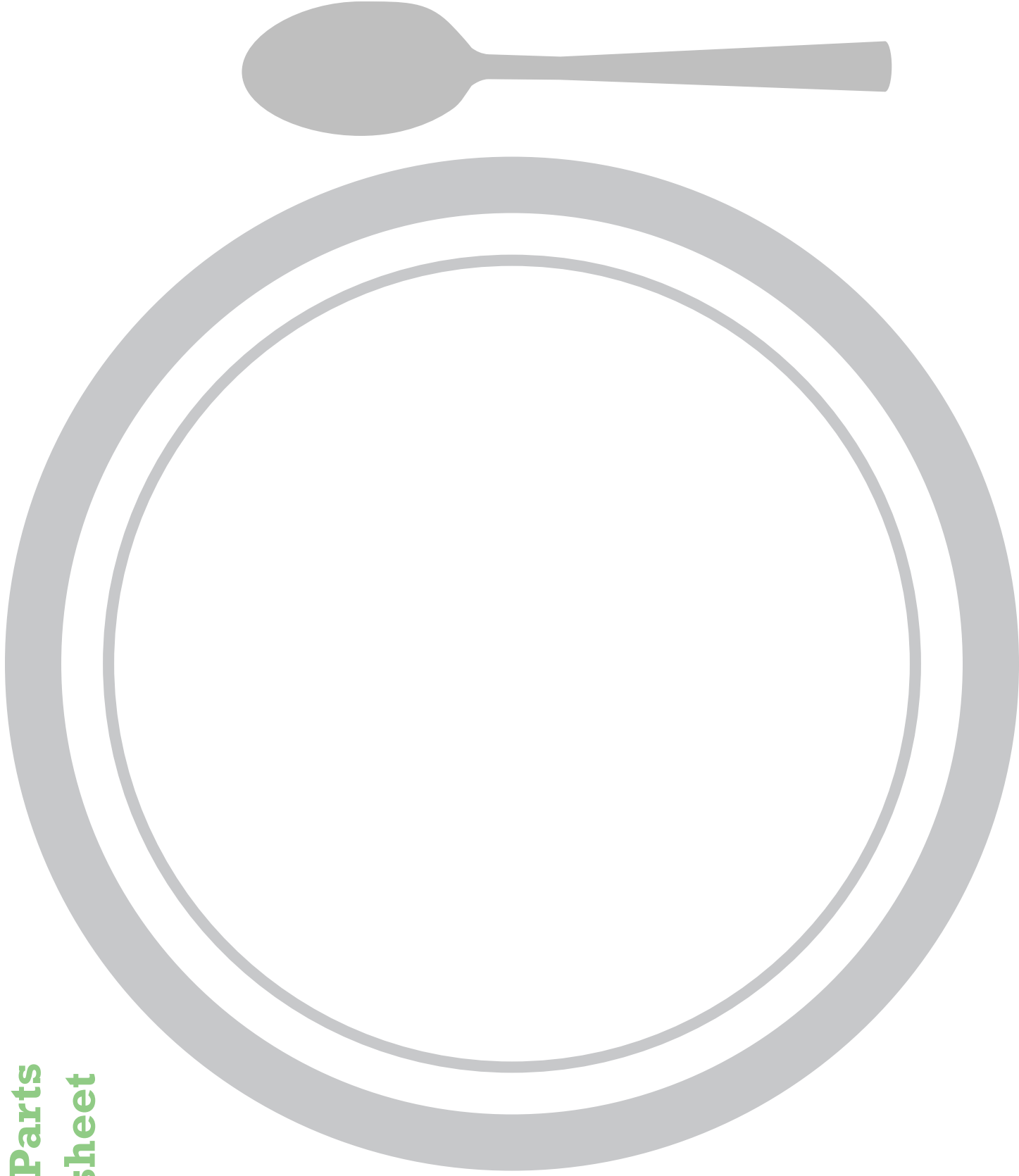
- Pass out empty plate worksheets
- Let students design and draw their ideal snack using all six plant parts
- Put the above list up on the board for students to refer to
- Allow students to share their designed snack with a partner or with the whole class!

5. Plant Part Snack

Assemble Plant Part Wraps

- Create a buffet of the 6 plants parts
- Have students come scoop a little of each
- Demonstrate how to roll up ingredients inside Romaine Lettuce leaf (like a wrap or burrito)
- Remind students to wait until everyone has their snack in front of them before we start eating
- When everyone is ready, tell students

**Plant Parts
Worksheet**



Romaine Lettuce Life Cycle

