

March

..... HARVEST OF THE MONTH

SWEET POTATO

NC Standard Course of Study

Science

3.L.2.1 Remember the function of the following structures as it relates to the survival of plants in their environments:

- Roots – absorb nutrients
- Stems – provide support
- Leaves – synthesize food
- Flowers – attract pollinators and produce seeds for reproduction

3.L.2.3 Summarize the distinct stages of the life cycle of seed plants

4.L.2.2 Explain the role of vitamins, minerals, and exercise in maintaining a healthy body

Healthful Living

3.NPA.2.1 Identify the sources of a variety of foods

4.NPA.2 Understand the importance of consuming a variety of nutrient dense foods and beverages in moderation

5.NPA.2.1 Summarize the influences of family, culture, and the media on food choices

Materials needed:

- Life Cycle Handouts
- Supply Chain Handouts
- Scratch paper and writing utensils
- White board markers/Chalk

Goal:

Students will test what they have learned about the life cycle and the supply chain of various local produce by reviewing what they learned in February about Sweet Potatoes. The activities in this lesson will also deepen students' understanding of where they exist within the global food system.



Activity Length:

60 minutes ideal



Location:

Classroom

Sweet Potatoes Life Cycle

Tell students that because March's Harvest of the Month is the same as February's, we are going to test ourselves and see what we remember about the life cycle of sweet potatoes!

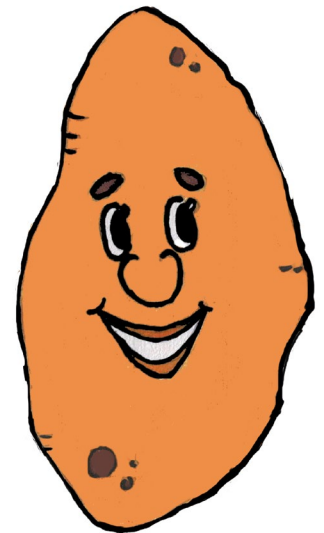
Pass out the "Sweet Potato Life Cycle" handouts. Give students 5-10 minutes to complete the handout, and then go over the answers together by reading through the script:

- Before it grows into a plant, what do sweet potatoes start out as? **Seeds.**
- What do sweet potatoes need to grow? **Sun, Soil, Water, and Air.**
- When most people plant sweet potatoes, they do not plant the actual **seed.** They plant **slips**, which are sprouts that grow out of a mature sweet potato.
- The **slips** are planted in the ground and become sweet potato plants. The **slips** send additional **roots** down into the soil.
- Sweet potatoes begin to grow at the ends of these additional **roots.** The **root** of the sweet potato plant is the part we eat!
- After growing roots, the sweet potato plant will send 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 cabbage plant uses this energy to create food for itself.
- A **mature sweet potato** can be saved to grow more **slips**, and the cycle begins all over again!

Supply Chain

Pass out "Supply Chain" handouts. *Say, we are going to test our memories again. Can we remember what the steps of the supply chain are that get the food from the farm to our plate?* Give students 5-10 minutes to complete the handout. When everyone is done, go over the handouts together arriving at these answers:

- 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, review the featured produce!
If space, gather in a circle or around the poster.

The Harvest of the Month for MARCH is SWEET POTATOES!

- *What part of the sweet potato plant do we eat? (Root)*
- *What state is the largest producer of sweet potatoes in the United States? (North Carolina)*
- *Do you remember what vitamin Sweet Potatoes are full of? (Vitamin A)*
- *What does this vitamin help us do? (See well/good eyesight)*

What's Growing On?



1. Your Favorite Meal

Warm-up script:

How much do we really know about where our food comes from? Hopefully over the past few months, we have learned a lot about the journey our food takes to get from the farm to our plate, and all the people who help our food move around our town, state, and even country! In today's activity, we are going to spend some time diving even deeper into the food system.

Ask students: What is the best meal you have ever had? Why is it your favorite meal? Encourage them to come up with a full meal, and not just one dish or ingredient. Give students a chance to share with the rest of the class. Then, select one meal from the answers given that you want to focus on for the next part of the activity.

Ask the class to name as complete a list as possible of the ingredients of this meal, and write them down on the board. Push students to be as thorough as possible, and to make guesses about ingredients if they're not sure. Once you have thought through the ingredients of the meal as much as possible, choose just three that you want to explore even further. Circle these ingredients on the board.

Break students into discussion groups of about 5-6. Assign each group one of the circled ingredients (more than one group can have the same ingredient). Ask students to discuss these questions together:

- Where does this ingredient come from?
- What does the place it comes from look like?
- Who works there?
- What do the workers at this place do with this ingredient?
- Do I know any more about the way this ingredient gets to me through this place and these people?

Have each group write down answers and share with the class.

Debrief: *Did we learn anything new about where our food comes from? What did you think about today that you may never have thought about before when considering your food? What will this activity make you think about the next time you are shopping for food with your family?*

Sweet Potatoes Life Cycle





Sweet Potatoes Life Cycle

Instructions: Use the word bank below to put the steps of the sweet potato life cycle in order from start to finish.

SEEDS
ROOTS
SLIPS
STEM
SWEET POTATO
LEAVES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____



Sweet Potatoes Supply Chain

Instructions: Use the word bank below to put the steps of the sweet potato life cycle in order from start to finish.

1.



Eat

2.



Harvest

3.



Transport

4.



Plant

5.



Prepare