

# September: Eating Pumpkins

## Materials

Pumpkins, microwave, knife, cutting board, worksheet, napkins, poster board, construction paper, scissors, glue, trash bags, animal crackers, cinnamon, hand blender

## Preparation

Grow or purchase pumpkins, microwave pumpkins before class, print pumpkin life cycle prompts

## Activity – 45 minutes

### *Review Nutrition - 5 minutes*

The very first thing the class is going to eat out of the garden are pumpkins! Because we introduced nutrition last time, we are going to talk about the nutrients that are in pumpkins. Ask your students what they know about pumpkins - what color are they? What shape are they? See if anyone knows what they taste like - outside of pumpkin pie or pumpkin cookies, has anyone eaten just plain pumpkin?

Pumpkins are orange which means that they are full of Vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for your whole body: it strengthens eyesight, helps keep your memory strong, and is essential for the growth and repair of body tissues. Vitamin A is found in yellow and orange foods - ask your class if they can name any foods (other than pumpkins) that could be full of Vitamin A.

### *Harvest Pumpkins - 10 minutes*

Head out to the garden and harvest all the ripe pumpkins. Set them aside, and clear the remainder of the garden. Pull the pumpkin vines out and throw them in the trash. Be careful not to disturb the kale and beets that are still growing.

### *Prepare Pumpkin Snack - 10 minutes*

Back inside the classroom, cut pumpkins into quarters and clean out the pulp, saving a few seeds. Cut one of the quarters into 3 or 4 pieces and microwave them until tender (about 7 minutes). Cut the flesh into chunks and blend the pumpkin in a hand blender with some cinnamon. Serve scoops of the applesauce-like consistency pumpkin puree on animal crackers.

After students have tried the pumpkin sauce, have them write down their reflections. Did they think it was sweet? Did they like it?

### *Life Cycle of a Pumpkin Poster - 20 minutes*

Because pumpkins do most of their growing over the summer, it is hard to observe their entire life cycle. In order to really get a sense of how pumpkins grow, the class is going to make a poster depicting the life cycle of a pumpkin.

Divide students into 5 groups and each group will make one of the garden poster elements - soil/seedlings, pumpkin vine/leaves, pumpkin flowers, green pumpkins, orange pumpkins. As a class discuss the basic shapes and colors that each group is going to need. Let students work on their garden elements in their groups. If students finish early, have them create supplementary elements - weather elements, bees, butterflies, worms, etc.

When students are finished, have student affix their garden elements to the poster in the correct order. When the poster is complete, affix the 'life stages of the pumpkin' prompts to the poster and hang it up in your garden corner!



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What nutrient is found in pumpkin?

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What are four other foods where we can find Vitamin A?

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What did you think of the pumpkin sauce? Describe it using complete sentences:

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Have you ever tried plain pumpkin before?

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# Life Cycle of a Pumpkin

Print out these descriptions and paste them on the poster that your class makes.

A pumpkin  
starts out as a  
**seed**

It grows into a  
**seedling**

The seedling  
becomes a  
**vine**

On the vine,  
you'll see some  
**flowers**

The flower  
becomes a  
**green pumpkin**

The green  
pumpkin  
matures into an  
**orange pumpkin**