

My First Garden

Rodale Institute's Guide to teaching children where their food comes from and starting a school garden

Lesson 4: Harvest and Tasting Party! Invite the whole family to come and share in the tasting.

Objective 1: To encourage children to try new healthy foods.

Objective 2: Introduce children to cooking and food preparation skills.

Objective 3: Involve parents and other family members in food choices and exploration.

Materials: Scissors, baskets/bags, mixing bowls, recipe ingredients, knives, sink and water for washing produce, strainer, cutting board.

Activities:

1. **Harvesting the garden:** Observe the garden and talk about how we know when a plant is ready to pick and eat. Explain that even though we are picking part of the plant to eat, usually the whole plant lives on so we must be careful when pulling off a leaf or fruit or pod that we do not pull out the roots.

Using hands or scissors, pick lettuce & spinach leaves; pull radishes from ground; pluck off pea pods, etc. Put harvest into a bowl, basket or bag to bring inside.

2. **Making a salad:** Bring bowl of harvested leaves inside. Children will wash the leaves, with the help of an adult, by filling up the bowl with water and moving the leaves around to loosen any soil. They will remove the leaves and place them in a strainer to drain in the sink. Then children will rip leaves into small pieces and place in the bowl.

Remember: it is very important to teach children the best way to wash hands before handling food. Use warm water, soap hands and sing the "ABC's" twice through while rubbing together, then dry with disposable paper towel.

3. **Make salad dressing** (ranch or vinaigrette): children will mix ingredients and shake up jars to combine.

Sample Recipe: Ranch Dressing

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup buttermilk or regular milk
- 3/4 - 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon dried chives
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/8 teaspoon finely cracked pepper

- freshly squeezed lemon juice to taste, approximately 1-3 teaspoons, adjust to taste

Instructions:

Whisk together the mayo, sour cream and milk until smooth. Add the spices and whisk until combined. Add the lemon and whisk again. Pour into a jar and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve. This dressing will keep nicely in the refrigerator for up to a week. Enjoy!

- 4. Sautéed Greens:** This is great for kale, spinach or pac choi and only takes about 5-10 minutes total time.

Ingredients:

- 1 tbs olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- ½ lb - ¾ lb of greens (nice sized bunch)
- Salt and Pepper

Wash and chop up greens finely. Mince or press garlic. Heat olive oil in medium to large pan and then drop in garlic until fragrant (about 30 seconds). Add greens and stir gently until coated with oil. Add a pinch of salt and pepper to taste. Continue stirring until wilted but still bright green. Serve topped with sunflower seeds, parmesan cheese or just plain. Also delicious mixed in pasta, rice or couscous.

- 5. Share with the family!!**

Complete Materials Guide

Note that books can also be borrowed from the library to cut costs and that prices are estimations and may vary depending upon region.

Lesson 4: Harvest and Tasting Party

Material	Quantity	Source	Approx. cost*
Scissors	4 – 8	Walmart/Target/Dollar Store	\$10.00 – \$15.00
Baskets or large mixing bowls to harvest into	3 – 4	Walmart/Target/Dollar Store	\$10.00 - \$15.00
Recipe ingredients	See recipes	Grocery Store	\$10.00 - \$15.00

Cooking utensils: Knives, colander, cutting board, measuring cups/ spoons, frying pans, mixing spoons, etc.	As appropriate	Walmart/ Target/ Dollar Store	\$10.00 - \$25.00
Plates, bowls, forks, napkins, for tasting	As appropriate	Walmart/Target/Dollar Store	\$10.00 – \$20.00