



Basic Vegetable Gardening

Lesson 13: Harvesting

Lesson Summary: Boys and girls learn how and when to harvest produce from the garden.

Boys and girls will:

- know the signs that produce is ready to be harvested.
- use correct ways to harvest produce.

Time: 40 minutes

What you need:

Notebook or paper for notes

Pocket Guide from set of garden materials

Note: You can teach this lesson more than one time during the garden season. Vegetables will be ready to harvest at different times. Seeds will also be ready to save at different times.

Lesson Steps

1. (2 minutes) – Introduction

2. (5 minutes) – Talk about harvesting fruits and vegetables.

Harvest means to pick the fruit or vegetable from the plant. Some produce in the group's garden may be ready to harvest.

It is important to pick fruit at the right time so that it tastes good and has a high level of nutrition.

Ripe produce is very easy to take off of the plant.

3. (15 minutes) Go out to the garden and look at some of the plants.

Look at the plants and see if they are ready to harvest.

Use the Pocket Guide to discuss when the vegetables are ready to harvest.

If possible, pick one ripe vegetable, one over-ripe vegetable, and one under-ripe vegetable. Wash and cut them up. Have the boys and girls taste the difference.

Some people let vegetables get too mature before harvesting. Why do you think they do that?

4. (10 minutes) Talk about saving seeds for next year.

4.1 Compare the advantages (good) and disadvantages (bad) of saving seeds or buying seeds for future plantings. Have boys and girls make a chart in their notebooks.



	Saving seeds *	Buying seeds
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost • Grow well in local climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed for local climate • Higher yield • Resistant to many diseases • High germination rate
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have disease or not be resistant to diseases • Poor germination rate • Lower yield • Need proper storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs more • Hybrids cannot be saved (usually sterile)

* Saving seeds only works with open-pollinated seeds. They are from plants that self-pollinate or are pollinated naturally by wind or insects.

What seeds are best saved? Which seeds are better to buy?

4.2 If you decide to save seeds, follow these steps:

1. Before you harvest the plants, choose the best, big fruits and vegetables to save for seeds.
2. When you choose the fruit that you will use to save seeds, mark it with a stick. Do not harvest it for food.
3. Save tomato and cucumber seeds by separating the tomato seeds from the cucumber seeds. Put them in water. Then put them in the sun for a few days. Fungus will form. It will help keep your seeds and prepare them for new growth. After three or four days, rinse your seeds and dry them. Save them for the next planting.

5. (5 minutes) - Review

Ask the boys and girls these questions:

- How can you tell if a fruit or vegetable is ready to harvest?
Answer: It comes off from the plant easily.
- What are some advantages of saving seeds? What are some advantages of buying seeds?

6. (1 minute) - Close

Tell the boys and girls when the next meeting will be and what the topic will be.

Keep all of your notes in your notebook.



An example of harvesting information from the *Pocket Guide to School Gardens*.

Common Name & Scientific Name	Root System & Growing Conditions	Days to Harvest & Method	Health Benefits	Comments, Propagation, & Companion Plants
<p>Kale <i>Brassica oleracea acephola</i></p>  <p>Above Ground</p>	<p>Sun: Partial</p> <p>Root Depth: Shallow/Medium</p> <p>Prefers organic matter in soil with good moisture retention. Needs rich soil and lots of water. Tolerates high temperatures.</p>	<p>50-80 days</p> <p>Harvest and cook all parts of plant: leaves, flowering shoot, and stems.</p>	<p>Excellent source of vitamin C to help heal cuts and wounds, fight infection, improve immune system, and keep gums healthy. Excellent source of vitamin A for eyesight, especially for seeing at night. Some iron.</p>	<p>Good companion plants: beans, onions, tomatoes, and marigolds.</p>