Leafy Salad Greens

NORTHCOAST NUTRITION AND FITNESS COLLABORATIVE
Leafy Salad Greens

Staff:
Teacher and garden coordinator
plus extra adults to make appropriate ratio

Classroom Setting:
Classroom or Garden

Learning Objective:
Nutrition Education and Health: To promote healthy eating and active living through:
✓ Identifying and defining key nutrients and their functions (adapt for K-3, see Appendix 1)
✓ Discussing the nutritional value of leafy salad greens
✓ Selecting nutritious foods by comparing nutritional information
✓ Supporting others in making positive food and physical activity choices
✓ Creating and cooking healthy recipes using leafy salad greens

Gardening: To provide basic gardening skills through:
✓ Learning basic planting and harvesting techniques
✓ Students will understand the lifecycle of leafy salad greens

Curricular Links:
Health Education Content Standards as adopted March 12, 2008, by the California State Board of Education at http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.pdf. The Health Education Content Standards represent a strong consensus of the essential knowledge and skills that students should know and be able to do at a specific grade level.

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Did You Know?

Leafy Salad Greens Facts

- California produces approximately 81% of the leaf lettuce grown in the U.S.
- Romaine is the dominant leaf lettuce cultivar in California with approximately 64% of production followed by green leaf - 21%, red leaf - 10%, and butterhead - 5%
- California produced approximately 18% of all commercially grown cabbage in the United States (NASS, 1999) and is the highest production state, followed by New York, Texas, North Carolina and Georgia.
- California accounts for 48% of the nation’s spinach production and is the leading producer of spinach in the United States.
- Lettuce, a member of the sunflower family, is one of the oldest known vegetables and is believed to be native to the Mediterranean area. In the United States lettuce ranks second only to potatoes as the most popular vegetable. Average U.S. consumption in the 1990s was 30 pounds of lettuce per person per year.
- There are four main types of lettuce: head lettuce, romaine, loose leaf and butterhead.
- Head lettuce is better known as iceberg lettuce. Up until the 1920s it was known as “crisphead” but was renamed when California growers began shipping the lettuce under mounds of ice to keep the heads cool and crisp.
- Romaine lettuce was named by the Romans who believed it had healthful properties. In fact, the Emperor Caesar Augustus put up a statue praising lettuce because he believed it cured him from an illness.
- Spinach probably first grew in southwest Asia or the western Himalayas. It was first brought to Europe in the ninth century when it was introduced to Spain by Persian Arabs, who gave the plant its name.
- Cabbage is available in many varieties: red or purple, green and Napa cabbage, usually found in Chinese cooking, bok choi and Brussels sprouts

Nutritional Facts

- 2 cups of raw Green Leaf lettuce provides more than 100% of the recommended Daily Value (DV) for Vitamin A, and more than 150% of the DV for Vitamin K. It is also an excellent source of Vitamin C (22% DV).
- 2 cups of raw Spinach provides more than 100% of the DV for Vitamin A and almost 4 times the DV for Vitamin K. Spinach is also an excellent source for folate (30% DV), Vitamin C (28% DV), and manganese (26% DV). Further, Spinach is a good source of iron, magnesium, and potassium.
- 1 cup of raw, shredded cabbage is an excellent source of Vitamin C and K. Cabbage is also a good source of Vitamin A.
- It is important to eat a rainbow of colors to get a good variety of vitamins and minerals. Choosing red, green, and purple leafy greens is a wonderful, healthy way to do this.
## Nutritional Data for Leafy Salad Greens, Raw

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leafy Green Type</th>
<th>Serving Size</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Fiber</th>
<th>Calorie</th>
<th>Vitamin A</th>
<th>Vitamin C</th>
<th>Vitamin K</th>
<th>Folate</th>
<th>Manganese</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romaine or Cos</td>
<td>1 cup, shredded</td>
<td>8 kcals</td>
<td>1 gram</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Leaf</td>
<td>1 cup, shredded</td>
<td>5 kcals</td>
<td>0 grams</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceberg</td>
<td>1 cup, shredded</td>
<td>10 kcals</td>
<td>1 gram</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Leaf</td>
<td>1 cup, shredded</td>
<td>4 kcals</td>
<td>0 grams</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterhead (with</td>
<td>1 cup, chopped</td>
<td>7 kcals</td>
<td>1 gram</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston &amp; Bibb types)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>1 cup, chopped</td>
<td>22 kcals</td>
<td>2 grams</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Spinach</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>7 kcals</td>
<td>1 gram</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>181%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. Funded by USDA SNAP, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit www.cachampionsforchange.net for healthy tips. -California Department of Public Health
Activity 1: Planting and Harvesting

Supplies and Equipment for Cultivation:
✓ Seeds
✓ Garden Tools

Background Information:
Leaf type lettuce, either with green or reddish leaves is fast-growing and long-lasting with good nutritional value and a variety of uses. Leafy salad greens are a cool-season vegetable and is extremely sensitive to high temperatures. Leafy salad greens for this lesson includes all leaf type lettuces used in salads and eaten raw, such as Romaine, Butterhead, Spinach, Red Leaf, Green Leaf, and Cabbage. Generally, the darker the color of the leaf, the higher the nutritional value. More background information can be found after Activity 2.

Nutrients:
There are a number of different kinds of leafy salad greens, but as a rule, darker green leaves contain more nutrients. Iceberg lettuce is probably the most popular, but also the least nutritious. Romaine and loose leaf lettuce have up to six times more vitamin C and more than ten times as much beta carotene (which converts to vitamin A in our bodies) than Iceberg. Spinach has more than 100% of the Daily Value of vitamin K and over 50% of the Daily Value of vitamin A. Spinach is a good source of folate, vitamin C and manganese, and a source of magnesium, potassium and iron. Cabbage is an excellent source of vitamins C and K.

Seasonal Information

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*The planting and harvesting information is general. Please contact your local nursery for specific growing season information.

In general, the green leaf, red leaf, and romaine type leafy greens are the most hardy in a larger range of temperatures. Cabbage and Spinach don’t tolerate the heat as well and should be planted as a cool season crop in the fall. All these leafy salad greens tolerate frost well.

Time:
40 minutes for Planting Activity
40 minutes for Harvesting Activity
Preparation and cooking time varies by recipe.

Target Ages: K-8
Adapt as necessary for grades K-3
(see Appendix #1)

Group Size: Whole class divided into small groups

Note: Food stamps can be used to buy seeds and plants to grow food. See Appendix 14 for more information on the use of USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, and SNAP-Ed allowable costs for gardening and nutrition education.
Activity 1: Planting and Harvesting Continued

County Information:
- Del Norte and Humboldt: Many varieties of leafy salad greens are grown including romaine, oak leaf, spinach and butterhead, all year around because the climate is mild enough and the greens can withstand frost. Spinach and cabbage are more sensitive to the heat, so growing in the cooler months is usually preferred.
- Mendocino: Leafy salad greens are always a cool season crop and for Mendocino the cool growing seasons are September through December and March through May / June. Out on the coast, the cool season extends through January and February as well. Leafy salad greens can grow into the summer if kept well shaded in the warmer parts of the county.
- Lake: Cabbage is seeded in late December or January, planted outside in late January or February, and harvested in spring. Many leafy salad greens are difficult to grow in Lake County. Loose leaf are the best ones to try. Leafy salad greens are best started from seed in early September for a fall crop and again indoors in early spring for a spring crop.
- Sonoma: With some protection when the weather is very hot or very cold, some leafy salad greens can be grown all year. Recommended planting dates are from February through October. Plant head lettuce in early spring only. Other greens plant every 2 to 3 weeks from spring through fall for continued harvest.
- Napa: Leafy salad greens are best planted in February & March. Cabbage is best planted in January & February. All the leafy salad greens are not tolerant of heat, especially head type, so these need shade especially during afternoon sun and close to harvest time.

Supplemental Student Activity:
“Fruit & Vegetables Power Play Journal”
- Appendix 6 or pg. 37 of Children’s Power Play! 4th Grade School Idea & Resource Kit, Activities 1-5.
- Students record how many fruits and vegetables they eat and how many minutes they are physically active for 2 days. Students analyze their journals using the fruit and vegetable and physical activity recommendations and the Get the Power, Worksheet 5A. Then they will write a short composition about areas needing improvement.

Get Physical: “Salad Toss”
1. Get Ready: Have the students get into a circle and mark their place with a small rock, tape, or chalk. Ask the students what kinds of toppings they like on their salad. Choose 3 of the answers and go around the circle assigning each student to one of the answers in turn (carrot, bell pepper, cucumber, etc.).
2. Get Set: Stand in the middle of the circle and tell the students that when you say the name of one of the groups, that group has to come off their spot and find a new spot, and that you will be trying to find a spot on the circle too. One person will always be left in the middle. You can also say “Salad!” in which case everyone has to find a new spot.
3. GO: Play the game until everyone has had a turn to be in the middle.

Go Further: Ask students to name their favorite specific color fruit or vegetable salad topping (ex. Yellow: yellow bell pepper; green: peas). Make a rainbow around the circle (6 stations with one each color of the rainbow) and continue with Step 2. Emphasize variety helps to meet all nutritional needs.

Adapted from the CATCH curriculum.
Activity 1: Planting and Harvesting Continued

Planting:

1. **Planting:** Leafy salad greens can be seeded directly or started in containers and set out in the garden (transplants). Use transplants that are 3-4 weeks old. A fully developed head of leafy salad greens requires 12 inches of space between plants or more; leafy salad greens harvested at 3 to 4 inches may be grown an inch or two apart. You can do both: sow the seeds about an inch apart in rows 4 to 6 inches apart. Time the planting so that it matures during periods of cool temperatures. Leafy salad greens are fairly hardy plants but they do need fertile and moist soil, especially if growing from seed. Remember that the leafy salad greens are sensitive to heat so if you are doing a spring or early summer planting, be sure that they are planted in areas that are well shaded during the afternoon. If the plants are in too hot of weather, they will bolt. Bolting is when the plant is signaled, usually by high temperatures, to produce flower and seeds and to abandon leaf growth almost completely. If bolting occurs, the leaves are basically not edible due to being very bitter.

2. **Discuss:** At each stage of growth and development of the leafy salad greens, the students are to observe and record their observations. Lead a discussion about the life cycle of plants to elicit their knowledge. Have students talk about the different varieties of raw leafy salad greens that they eat. Using the Fruit & Vegetable Power Play! Journal in Appendix 6, have the students record their fruit and vegetable intake, especially raw leafy salad greens. Students can discuss how leafy salad greens are prepared in their homes.

**Go Farther:** Have students look at the two recipes that they will be preparing after the leafy salad greens are harvested. Discuss which of the ingredients can be planted in the garden and which will be bought at the grocery store. For the Lettuce Roll-Up, all the ingredients in the roll-up can be found in the garden. Use www.harvestofthemonth.com to find out when and how each of the ingredients, except for celery, can be planted in the garden. Discuss where yogurt, orange juice, and vinegar come from and where they are found in the store. If you have the opportunity, visit your local grocery store and look at labels for these ingredients to see what nutritional value they add to the recipe. Have a similar discussion for the Rainbow Coleslaw.

3. **Maintain:** Cultivate carefully because leafy salad greens are shallow-rooted. Frequent, light watering encourages rapid growth, but take care not to over water. Mulches help maintain soil moisture and keep leaves off the ground. When the plants are 3 to 4 inches high, start removing plants, leaving 8 to 12 inches between rows and between plants in row. Cut the plants off at ground level to avoid disturbing the roots of the plants that are left to grow.

**Go Farther:** During maintenance, discuss which of the different ingredients in the recipes in Activity 2, can be planted now, what is their growth cycle, and when will they be ready for harvesting.
Activity 1: Planting and Harvesting continued

**Harvesting:**

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*The planting and harvesting information is general. Please contact your local nursery for specific growing season information.

- Time to full maturity from planting to harvesting head for common leafy salad greens:
  - Romaine: 65 to 70 days
  - Bibb: 55 to 60 days
  - Iceberg: 85 to 90 days
  - Butterhead: 55 to 60 days
  - Mesclun: 40 to 60 days
  - Red Leaf and Green Leaf: 45-55 days
  - Spinach: approximately 49 days
  - Cabbage: 60 to 110 days depending on early, mid or late season variety

- Romaine lettuce is ready to harvest when the leaves have elongated and overlapped to form a fairly tight head about 4 inches wide at the base and 6-8 inches tall. If leafy salad greens are to be stored, harvest when dry but early in the day when water content of plants is high.

- When harvesting, remove the entire plant or use the ‘cut and cut again’ method: When leaves are 3 to 4 inches high, cut them off without harming the crown of the plant (leave 1 to 2 inches of the plant). New leaves will grow from the crown. Plants can be cut 3 to 4 times, then pulled out and replaced.

  - The ‘cut and cut again’ method is a much faster way for students to see success in growing leafy salad greens. Many will be ready in as little as 30 days. Also, the leafy salad greens tend to be sweeter when cut earlier.

- Remove outer leaves but do not wash. Place in a plastic bag and store in the crisper drawer. Correctly harvested and trimmed leafy salad greens store reasonably well in most refrigerators and will keep for about 2 weeks.

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**Get Physical:**

“Leaf Line”

1. **Get Ready:** This activity challenges students to communicate without words while reinforcing concepts like size, shape, and color and the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables.

2. **Get Set:** Have students take turns harvesting the leafy greens and working in the garden. Instruct the students who are waiting for their turn to look at leaves, fruits and vegetables of all different colors from the garden (without picking it off the plant).

3. **GO:** After all the students have had a turn in the garden tell them to get in line based on the color of their leaf, fruit, and/or vegetable and have them make a rainbow (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, red). Tell them to do this without talking. After being in line, emphasize the importance of eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables each day. Remind the students that by eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables you will get the most variety of nutrients, which is important for a healthy body.

Go Further: Have students act out the following tree actions: tree swaying in the wind, tree during a storm, tree weighted down with snow, tree losing its leaves. Or have students act like different types of trees: pine tree, oak tree, palm tree.

Adapted from energizers developed by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in partnership with East Carolina University, Be Active NC, and NC Healthy Schools.
Activity 2: Preparing and Cooking

Supplies for Recipes:
- leafy salad greens from the garden
- ingredients not in your garden
- measuring cups and spoons
- grater
- whisk
- mixing bowls for salad and dressing
- large bowl for salad
- knives
- serrated sandwich spreader for K-5
- cutting mats or boards
- bowls and forks
- spoon for serving or salad tongs
- plates and forks for serving

Background Information:
Note: Ideally the leafy salad greens should be picked from the garden. If this is not possible, fresh leafy salad greens from the grocery store or local farmers market may be used.

Nutrients:
See Page 4 for comparison of nutrients in various leafy greens.

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Supplemental Student Activity:
“You Be the Food Critic”
- Appendix 7 or pg. 1 of Children’s Power Play! 5th Grade School Idea & Resource Kit, Activities 6-10.
Activity 2: Preparing and Cooking Continued

1. Make the connection between the garden and the health benefits of the recipe students will be making and tasting.
2. Divide the children into work groups (see “Cooking Activity Methods” in Appendix 2).
3. Review “Playing it Safe While Cooking” (see Appendix 3).
4. Have students read out loud the following recipe and review the ingredient list.
5. Highlight fruits, vegetables (including leafy salad greens) and nutrients in the recipes. For more information go to www.harvestofthemonth.com.
6. Prepare the recipe, utilizing Appendices to adapt for different ages of students.
7. After tasting, use the Supplemental Student Activity “You Be the Food Critic” in Appendix 7.

Lettuce Roll-Up

Makes: 20 servings
Prep time: 15 minutes

2 head of Romaine Lettuce or other leafy green
2 medium carrots
2 medium apples, any kind
2 small heads of broccoli (about 4 cups)
2 stalks of celery
1/2 cup roasted pumpkin seeds, lightly salted

Directions:
1. Remove leaves from the head of lettuce. Wash & dry. Set leaves aside.
2. Wash the carrot, grate it and add it to a bowl.
3. Wash the apple, slice it and add it to the bowl.
4. Wash the broccoli, chop it into bite sized florets and add it to the bowl.
5. Wash the celery, slice it and add it to the bowl.
6. Measure the pumpkin seeds and add them to the bowl.
7. Gently toss the salad together and add dressing below if desired.
8. Take each lettuce leaf and spoon a small amount of the filling into the end.
9. Roll the filling into the lettuce leaf, as if you were making a burrito. Fold two sides together like a book, and then roll the leaf away from you.

Dressing:
1 1/4 cup yogurt, nonfat, plain
5 Tablespoons orange juice
7 1/2 teaspoons white vinegar
Whisk all ingredients in a small bowl and pour over salad.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories, Carbohydrate g, Dietary Fiber g, Protein g, Total Fat g, Saturated Fat g, Trans Fat g, Cholesterol mg, Sodium mg

Adapted from WSU King County Extension at http://king.wsu.edu/Nutrition/documents/9_YouaretheChef_PlantPartSaladUnit1Grades1-3_000.pdf
Rainbow Coleslaw

2 cups thinly sliced red cabbage
2 cups thinly sliced green cabbage
1/2 cup chopped yellow or red bell pepper
1/2 cup shredded carrots
1/2 cup chopped red onion
1/2 cup fat free mayonnaise
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1/4 teaspoon celery seed (optional)
1/2 cup low fat Cheddar cheese, shredded

Directions:
1. Wash and dry all vegetables.
2. In a large bowl, combine all the vegetables.
3. In a small bowl, mix mayonnaise, vinegar, and celery seed (if desired) to make a dressing.
4. Pour the dressing over the vegetable mixture and toss until well coated.
5. Toss salad with cheese and served chilled.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 30, Carbohydrate 4g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Protein 2g, Total Fat 1g, Saturated Fat 0g, Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 2mg, Sodium 145mg

Makes: 20 servings
Approximately 1/4 cup per serving
Prep time: 15 minutes

Adapted from Soulful Recipes—Building Healthy Traditions, Network for a Healthy California at http://www.cachampionsforchange.com/en/docs/AACookbook_v21_FINAL.pdf
Background Information:

Leafy salad greens have been cultivated for over twenty-five hundred years. The Romans (hence the name Romaine Lettuce) grew a number of varieties and the vegetable (which is actually a member of the sunflower family) became widely appreciated throughout Asia and Europe. In the United States, an 1885 agricultural report listed no less than eighty-seven varieties of leafy salad greens. However, in today’s grocery store you will likely only locate about four kinds of leafy salad greens. Iceberg lettuce ranks second to potatoes as the most popular fresh vegetable in the United States. But, to really taste the wonder of raw leafy salad greens, visit your farmer’s market where there will be dozens of varieties all year around.

Extensions-Go Farther:

✓ Harvest or buy an example of each plant part and make Lettuce Roll Up (see recipe in Activity 2). Talk about the different functions of each plant part as you eat your salad. You can grow an example of each plant part in your school garden.

✓ Teach all ages the “Roots, Stems, Leaves” song and motions by Banana Slug Quartet on page 13. For older students (Grades 3-8), have students come up with their own examples of each plant part that they like to eat.

✓ Discuss the six different parts of plants (i.e. flower, stem, etc.) and their functions. (See Plant Parts We Eat on page 14). Have students give examples of each plant part they eat. Explain to students that they need to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to get all the vitamins and minerals needed for a healthy body. It is best if students can actually see an example of each plant part growing. If not, have an example of each. (You can make up plastic baggies with samples and have students snack on each as you discuss it, which is great for a classroom activity). Younger students can color in the Plant Parts We Eat (K-2). Older students can progress onto the What Part Am I? Worksheet on pages 15 and 16.

Resources:

Harvest of the Month Website: http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/download.asp#salad
Master Gardener Sonoma County: http://cesonoma.ucdavis.edu/Gardener/pdf/growing_salad_greens.pdf GROWING SALAD GREENS
UC Cooperative Web site:
http://groups.ucanr.org/sonomamg/Vegetable_of_the_Month/October_2008_Vegetable.htm KALE
http://groups.ucanr.org/sonomamg/Vegetable_of_the_Month/March_Vegetable.htm LETTUCE
http://groups.ucanr.org/sonomamg/Vegetable_of_the_Month/April_Vegetable.htm SWISS CHARD
Dole 5 A Day:
Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom: http://www.wyomingagclassroom.org/resources/pdf/1_2/plant.pdf
Get Physical

Coinciding actions to Chorus:

- Start out standing tall with arms at side
- Bend at knees, dropping to touch the floor singing Roots
- Jump up with arm at sides saying stems (you're a stem)
- Stretch arms straight out to your sides saying leaves
- Wiggle fingers around your face saying flowers
- Wiggle head back and forth with hands still around face-fruits
- Wiggle fingers as you bring hands from face down towards the ground saying seeds (seeds dropping to ground)

Repeat

(Song lyrics © Banana Slug String Band, reprinted with permission: www.bananaslugstringband.com)
Plant Parts We Eat

Color the vegetables. Make them look good enough to eat.

You eat our roots.
- beets
- radishes
- carrots

You eat my stems.
- asparagus

You eat our leaves.
- cabbage
- lettuce

You eat our fruit.
- pepper
- tomato

You eat our seeds.
- corn
- peas

You eat my flowers.
- cauliflower

From: Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom
http://www.wyomingagclassroom.org/resources/pdf/1_2/plant.pdf
What Part am I?  

Look at each picture, read the words, and circle the correct answer.

- **broccoli**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **pumpkin**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **cabbage**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **peas**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **grapes**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **beets**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **cucumber**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

- **potatoes**
  - root
  - fruit
  - seed
  - flower
  - leaf
  - stem

From: Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom  
http://www.wyomingagclassroom.org/resources/pdf/1_2/plant.pdf
What Part am I?  

Look at each picture, read the word, and circle the correct answer.

broccoli
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

cabbage
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

pumpkin
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

grapes
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

peas
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

tomatoes
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

cucumber
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

beets
- root
- seed
- leaf
- flower
- stem

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