

Which Parts of a Vegetable Plant do we Eat?

Connect – Understanding which parts of each vegetable plant we eat is a great way to connect with how our food grows. Each part of a vegetable plant not only feeds and nourishes our bodies when we consume it, but the parts also play important roles in keeping the plant healthy while it's growing.

Teach – Walk your students through each part of the plant using the parts and descriptions below. Discuss what each part does while the plant is growing and for younger kids have them act out each plant part. Next, give examples of SYG vegetables and which parts of each plant that we eat.

Roots: found underground; absorb water and nutrients for growth; store food for plant

- *SYG Root Vegetables:* Beets, Carrots, Garlic, Onions, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes Radishes, Turnips
- *Movement* – stomp your feet

Stems: connect leaves to roots; carry water and nutrients from roots to leaves, and carries carbohydrates after photosynthesis from leaves to roots for growth; some provide food storage

- *SYG Stem Vegetables:* Green Onions, Swiss Chard
- *Movement* – stand up tall and straight with arms down by your side

Leaves: catch the sun, which gives plants energy to grow through a process called photosynthesis; release moisture and oxygen

- *SYG Leaf Vegetables:* Arugula, Beet Greens, Cabbage, Collards, Kale, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Turnip Greens
- *Movement* – put your hands on your hips and flap your 'leaves' like wings

Flowers: where the fruits and seeds form

- *SYG Flower Vegetables:* Broccoli
- *Movement* – put your hands around your face

Fruits: contain seeds

- *SYG Fruit Vegetables:* Cucumber, Green Beans, Okra, Peppers, Squash, Sweet Peas, Tomatoes, Zucchini
- *Movement* – make a big circle with your arms above your head

Seeds: form inside the fruit; stores energy that grows a new plant

- *SYG Seed Vegetables:* Dried Beans
- *Movement* – Crouch down and hug your knees

Active Engagement – Using a cookbook or a quick google search, find a recipe that calls for a variety of vegetables. Vegetable soup, vegetable stir fry, or salsa might be good options. Read through the ingredient list with your students and have them guess which part of the vegetable will be eaten in the recipe.

- As an alternative for younger learners, read the book "Stone Soup" found online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZf60cb3Th8>. As the townspeople add vegetables to the soup, have students guess which part of the plant we eat.

Link – During a meal or snack, help students read and determine the ingredients that they are eating. Which ingredients are vegetables? Which part of the vegetable plant is being eaten?

