



Spring Newsletter

A Seasonal Missouri Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Newsletter

Lettuce



Did You Know?

Lettuce is the second most popular fresh vegetable in the United States! Americans eat about 5 times more lettuce now than we ate 100 years ago.



Read Together

From the Garden by Michael Dahl
Lettuce! by Diana Kizlauskas

Welcome Spring!

Soon, the world around us will be bursting with colors, especially green! Trees, grass and other plants, all shades of green will be popping up after a sleepy winter. Lettuce is a vegetable that can be planted in March because it will survive through the late winter cold weather. Lettuce and other Missouri grown leafy greens will be some of the first items you will find at your local farmers market this spring.

Shop Together

- Visit a farmers market and count how many different kinds of lettuce they sell.
- Ask a farmer to tell you the names of the different varieties.
- How many different colors of lettuce do you see?

Cook Together

Do It Yourself Lettuce Wraps

- 1 head soft leaf lettuce (Bibb or butter) leaves separated, washed and dried
 - 2 cups diced cooked chicken
 - 2 cups veggies such as diced tomatoes or cucumber, shredded carrots or cabbage
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce
 - 2 tablespoons lime juice
 - 1 teaspoon sugar
- Fresh herbs to taste: mint, cilantro, basil



1. Arrange lettuce leaves, veggies and herbs in bowls or on plates.
2. Whisk soy sauce, lime juice and sugar in a bowl.
3. To assemble, put a lettuce leaf on plate and add a small heap of ingredients across middle. Top with a spoonful of sauce.
4. Fold the sides in and roll the leaf around the filling like a burrito.



Science Corner

Re-Grow Your Lettuce Scraps

Supplies needed:

- Romaine lettuce
- Toothpicks
- Shallow bowl
- Knife
- Water
- Sunlight



It is easy and fun to sprout lettuce from kitchen scraps! Start by using your knife to chop off the bottom three inches, or core, of a head of Romaine lettuce. Then, put just enough water in a bowl to cover the bottom third of your lettuce core when it is placed inside. Next, break a few toothpicks in half and stick them into the bottom of the lettuce core. These little toothpick “legs” will help keep the lettuce core upright in the bowl and allow water to circulate under the bottom. Place the lettuce in a location where it will get some sunlight. Change the water every couple of days to keep it fresh. After just a few days you will notice the lettuce beginning to grow!

Ask children to tell you about the changes they see.

1. Measure the growth of the lettuce each day.
2. After 12 days, the lettuce turns a deep green color and starts to sprout some roots.
3. You can now replant it outside in soil if you want.

From the Field Stories from Missouri Providers

The director of Kerri’s Kidsville/ Babyville in Springfield loves to grow and serve fresh fruits and vegetables at the center, but has very limited space. She found that she could grow quite a bit in long narrow planter boxes along the west wall of the building. The sun’s rays reflecting off that wall are an extra bonus. To extend the growing season, she covered these planter boxes with thick plastic. The fruits and vegetables on Kerri’s menus may not all be grown at the center, but nearly all of them are fresh!



Tips for Using Lettuce

- Wash fresh lettuce from the garden or market under cold running water. Separate leaves to remove sand and dirt.
- Use a salad spinner to remove excess water. This is a fun activity for kids!
- Packaged, pre-washed lettuce from the store should not be washed again.
- Tearing lettuce leaves with your hands or cutting with a plastic knife keeps it from browning quickly.
- Chopped or thinly sliced pieces of lettuce may be easier for young children to eat.

The State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about the State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program at <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdph/dnpao/>.



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