



# Growing with MO

## Harvest of the Season

A Missouri Farm to Preschool Newsletter

April

## Strawberries



### Did You Know?

- Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside of their skin. There are about 200 seeds on each berry!
- Native species of strawberries are found in many parts of the world, but not in Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica.



### Read Together

***The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry and The Big Hungry Bear***  
by Audrey Wood

***Strawberries are Red*** by Peter Horacek

### A Favorite Fruit

Some children in Missouri child care centers were shown pictures of several fruits and vegetables, then they were asked what each one was and if they liked it. They were not sure about some of the pictures, but all of them knew and liked or loved strawberries! Their faces generally lit up when they saw this sweet red fruit. Most of the children also knew that this was a food that was good for them. A few of them made it clear that “You only eat the red part, not the green!” These kids are pretty smart when it comes to strawberries.

### Strawberry Picking

Picking strawberries is a wonderful activity to do with young children. What a great way for kids to really see where this fruit comes from! Strawberry plants grow close to the ground and do not have thorns, so it’s easy for little eyes and hands to see and reach the juicy red berries. If you don’t know where a local U-pick strawberry patch is, you can search for one at <https://missourigrownusa.com>. Missouri strawberries are usually ripe and ready for picking in May and June, but call the farm to make sure before you go.

### Cook Together

#### Strawberry Smoothie

- 1½ cups frozen whole strawberries, unsweetened
- 1½ cups frozen sliced peaches
- 1½ cups lowfat milk
- 8 oz. lowfat vanilla yogurt



1. Place all ingredients in a blender
2. Cover and blend until smooth
3. Serve immediately

For more fun, freeze leftover smoothie in freezer pop molds or in paper cups with wooden sticks inserted in center to make frozen treats.

Makes 8 child-size portions of ½ cup.



Let children help with steps marked with the little helping hand!

## Explore Strawberries

What you need: A fresh strawberry, cutting board or paper plate and a plastic knife. Wash hands and gently wash the strawberry under running water. Help your child remove the green stem and cut the strawberry in half with the plastic knife. Ask these questions as you explore together.

- What color is the inside?
- What shape is the strawberry?
- How does it feel on the outside? Inside?
- How does it smell?
- What are the tiny white things on the outside?
- Can we eat these tiny seeds?
- Why don't we eat the green part?
- And finally, how does the strawberry taste?

Note the different words your child uses to describe strawberries.



## From the Field

The Salisbury Missouri Head Start center used a sand and water table with a drainage hole to plant strawberries. In early March, they bought two large plants that already had tiny berries starting to form. A local nursery can suggest the best kind of strawberry plants to grow in a container.

The class used a good potting soil, moved the container to where it would get the most sunlight, watered regularly and watched closely as the plants and berries grew. By the time school was out in May, they had two strawberries ready to be picked! Director Donece Henke said the children were amazed to learn where this tasty fruit comes from.



Also amazing is that they were able to cut these two strawberries into small enough pieces so each child could have a bite!



## Tips for Using Strawberries

- Store unwashed strawberries in the refrigerator to keep them from getting moldy. Rinse under cool running water just before serving.
- Use sliced strawberries as a sweet topping for pancakes and waffles.
- Spread cream cheese or yogurt on a graham cracker and top with sliced strawberries for a healthy "fruit pizza."



*Growing with MO Harvest of the Season* is a project of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Team Nutrition Program. Young children learn about Missouri grown fruits and vegetables through preschool classroom experiences, gardening, field trips and through eating these foods in meals and snacks when they are in season.

[www.health.mo.gov/growingwithmo](http://www.health.mo.gov/growingwithmo)



This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.