

JULY 21

Week 3 - Zucchini Harvest & The Importance of Pollinators



Lesson Plan #11 and review of last lesson

Welcome to the eleventh lesson of the Junior Garden Club! In the last lesson we learned how to harvest and cook with kale.

It is a good time to check on all of your plants! Is there anything that needs to be harvested? A lot of plants will continue to grow and produce ripe vegetables. Make sure to continue picking them!



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Gardening tasks

Fill in your plant growth chart! Your plants may need an extra drink of water if it has been hot and sunny out. Check the soil first to see if it is moist. If it is dry, give it a drink of water!

Remember that gardening takes patience. Your plants may not be ready yet and that is ok! When the time is right for your plant, refer back to the lesson plan to see how to take care of it.



How to: Harvest and Store Zucchini

Zucchini are ready to be harvested when they are about 6 inches long. They will be the most flavourful when they are this size. The bigger they get they will lose their taste and can be slightly bitter. To harvest your zucchini, cut (don't pull) from the plant with a sharp knife, pruners, or scissors. Leave about an inch of stem on the zucchini. Zucchini can be stored in the refrigerator, unwashed, for a week to ten days.

The more zucchini you pick, the more will grow on your plant! Make sure to check on your zucchini frequently once the plant starts producing.



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Activity: Pollinators

In order for plants to produce the seeds that grow into new plants, pollen from the male parts of one flower needs to be carried to the female parts of another flower. This transfer of pollen is called pollination.

Pollen can be moved from plants by wind or by living creatures. Many pollinators are insects such as bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, moths, ants, and beetles.

The scents and colours of plants are what attracts pollinators. Pollinators pick up some of the powdery pollen on their bodies and carry it with them to the next flower they visit.

Pollinators allow us to enjoy many of the foods we eat! Without pollination, a lot of plants wouldn't be able to produce seeds to grow more plants.

Pollinators play an important role in the environment. In this activity, we will be making the lifecycle of a butterfly using pasta.

The Lifecycle of a Butterfly

You will need:

- A small amount of rice, fusilli, shell pasta, and bow tie pasta
- Paper
- Glue
- Marker, pen, or pencil



How to make it:

Use glue to attach the pieces of pasta to the paper, to represent the different stages of the butterfly life cycle. Label each stage of the life cycle:

1. Eggs: Butterflies lay their eggs on leaves. Draw some leaves on a piece of paper. Use rice to represent the eggs and glue it on. Label this step 'eggs'.
2. Caterpillar: When the eggs hatch, out comes a caterpillar. The caterpillar eats and eats until it forms itself into a chrysalis. Use fusilli pasta to represent a caterpillar and glue the fusilli onto the paper. Label this step 'caterpillar'.
3. Chrysalis: Inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar is changing into a butterfly. Use shell pasta to represent the chrysalis and glue it onto the paper. Label this step 'chrysalis'.
4. Lastly, a butterfly emerges from the chrysalis. Use bow tie pasta to represent a butterfly and glue it onto the paper after the chrysalis. Label this step 'butterfly.'

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Mighty Muffins

A recipe by Alberta Pulse Growers

This unique recipe features the mighty zucchini! It also contains black beans and banana. However, these ingredients add to the texture and sweetness of the muffins. The cocoa powder and chocolate chips will give these muffins a double chocolate flavour!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cooked or canned black beans, drained & rinsed
- 1 banana, mashed
- ½ cup milk
- ⅓ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 medium zucchini, grated, & excess water squeezed out
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup quick oats
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 2 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ cup chocolate chips (add more if you like!)



Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Put paper liners in muffin tin.
2. Add black beans, banana, milk, maple syrup, oil, eggs, and vanilla to the blender and purée until smooth. Transfer batter to a medium mixing bowl, add zucchini and stir to combine.
3. Add flour, oats, cocoa powder, chia seeds, and baking powder. Stir to combine. Gently fold in chocolate chips.
4. Divide batter into prepared muffin tin. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre of a muffin comes out clean.
5. Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan for 5–10 minutes, then remove muffins from the pan and let cool completely on a wire rack.



Keep an eye out for next week's lesson plan where you will learn how to harvest and cook with cucumbers!

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References:

The Old Farmer's Almanac—Growing Zucchini <https://www.almanac.com/plant/squash-and-zucchini>

The Spruce—Harvesting Zucchini, 2019 <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-harvest-zucchini-2540052>

Alberta Pulse Growers—Might Muffins <https://albertapulse.com/recipe/mighty-muffins/>

Kids Gardening—My Pollinator Journal <https://kidsgardening.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/KG-PollinatorJournal.pdf>

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