New Hampshire Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods. www.nhharvestofthemonth.org

History

Kale is a member of the Brassicaceae family, also known as the cabbage family, along with broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and kohlrabi. It originated in the Mediterranean region and was brought to the United States from England in the 17th century. Kale is a very hardy plant; it can withstand frosts and snowfall, making it an excellent staple food in the winter months. Kale plants range in color from white-green and yellow-green to blue-green and violet. Some varieties have been developed specifically for ornamental purposes.

Large Green-Leafed Varieties

- **Collards:** Champion, Georgia
- **Chard:** Fordhook Giant, Golden, Pink Passion, Rainbow Mix, Ruby or Rhubarb Red, Silverado

Reading Corner

- *Captain Kale and the Super Foods*, by Amy Roth

Fun Facts

- Out of the quite large cabbage family, kale is the closest relative to wild cabbage.
- Kale and collards are very similar; the difference is that kale has uneven leaf edges (serrated, lobed) and is less heat-tolerant.

VARIETIES OF KALE:

- Lacinato (Dinosaur)
- Red Russian
- Ripbor
- White Russian
- Siberian
- Vates

Sources: The Visual Food Encyclopedia, The Encyclopedia of Healing Foods, GMFTS
Benefits

Kale is an excellent source of vitamin A and C and the mineral potassium. It is a good source of vitamin B6 (pyridoxal phosphate) and the mineral copper.

English | The Autobiography of Kale

Supplies needed:
Several varieties of kale leaves or images of them; it would be helpful to include photographs exhibiting each season

Directions:
1. Have students imagine they are a kale plant and describe their life from seed to plate.
2. This is a great opportunity to discuss the life cycle of a plant, as it lives through the seasons.

Guiding words:
- **Winter**: eaten, frost-resistant, hardy, death
- **Spring**: warm soil, planting, birth, beginning, small leaves, rain, sun, nutrients
- **Summer**: rain, sun, nutrients, growth, large leaves, long days, harvesting (from the bottom up), eaten (by humans and insects)
- **Fall**: large leaves, harvesting (from the bottom up), eaten (by humans and insects)

Science | Parts of a Leaf

Supplies needed:
Drawing tools, journal page or handout, kale leaves or images of them

Directions:
1. Have students draw and label a kale leaf through observation.
2. On the board, you can draw the parts along with the students and discuss the role of each part as you go.
3. Key words: stem (petiole), veins, blade.
4. If age-appropriate, discuss chlorophyll and its role in photosynthesis.

Leaf Parts:
- **Stem** (petiole): attaches the blade to the main stem of the plant.
- **Veins**: carry nutrients throughout the plants.
- **Blade**: absorbs sunlight.
- **Photosynthesis**: is the process leaves use to convert light into food for the plant. Carbon dioxide and water are used and oxygen is released. This process is not visible.
- **Chlorophyll**: is what makes leaves green! It is involved in the process of photosynthesis. This pigment is visible.

Source: GMFTS

Harvest Lessons

For extended, standards-based lesson plans, visit: www.nhharvestofthemonth.org/harvest-lessons

Source: Vital Communities