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**

Tomatoes are a member of the family **Solanaceae**, along with eggplants, peppers and potatoes. They are native to Central America and Mexico; their dissemination throughout the globe was sparked by the Spanish’s colonization of the Americas. In tropical regions, they grow as short-lived perennials; in the temperate region of Vermont, they are annuals.

**Reading Corner**

» *A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds*, by Jean Richards
» *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato*, by Lauren Child
» *Little Yellow Pear Tomatoes*, by Demian Yumei
» *Tomatoes Grow on a Vine*, by Mari Schuh

**Fun Facts**

- The word tomato stems from the word *tomalt*, which was what the fruit was called in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs.
- There are over 1,000 varieties of tomatoes.
- Italians refer to the tomato as *pomodoro*, which translates as ‘golden apple.’

**Local Tomato Varieties:**

- Tang
- Green Zebra
- Copia Beefsteak
- Red Cherry
- Black Cherry
- Yellow Pear
- Amish Paste
- San Marzano Paste

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

Illustrated by Kathryn Hansis | © New Hampshire Farm to School (NH HOM), adapted with permission from Green Mountain Farm to School (GMFTS)
Benefits

Tomatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C, the mineral potassium and lycopene, a member of the carotenoid pigment family; they are a good source of vitamin B3 (niacin), B5 (pantothenic acid), B6 (pyridoxal phosphate) and B9 (folic acid), as well as dietary fiber.

Math | Counting Seeds

Supplies needed:
Varieties of tomatoes—aim for small (cherry, pear tomato), medium (green zebra, mountain princess) and large (beefsteak), drop cloths, knives

Directions:
1. Have students estimate the number of seeds inside each size of tomato. Write estimates on the board.
2. Next, have students cut the tomatoes and count the seeds by hand.
3. Write the true seed counts on the board—compare and contrast with the estimates and between the various sizes.

Science | Compare Tomato Varieties

Supplies needed:
Varieties of tomatoes, a handout that allows for drawings and written observations

Directions:
1. Have students compare and contrast varieties of tomatoes using sight (color, shape, size), touch (texture), taste and smell.
2. Create a class bar graph indicating favorite varieties.

History | Tomato Timeline

Supplies needed:
Follow this link: www.vermontharvestofthemonth.org/ uploads/2/8/9/6/28966099/08_tomato_lesson.pdf
Print out the timeline and map activity sheets on the last two pages

Directions:
1. Guiding question: Where do tomatoes come from?
2. Distribute the map and timeline. Students will read the tomato timeline and mark the tomato’s journey around the world.

Source: Vital Communities

HARVEST LESSONS

For extended, standards-based versions of the "Tomato Timeline" and "Counting Seeds" lesson plans, visit: www.nhharvestofthemonth.org/harvest-lessons