



SUMMER| Soil Under or Above: Where Did I Grow?

Summary:

Roots can be long, spidery, thin, thick, and sometimes delicious! We are going to do some comparing and contrasting on a root hunt! Our tiny gardeners are a little closer to the ground so they have a distinct advantage for finding roots. We will practice our observational skills as well as use some new vocabulary.

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: A shovel, tomato, pepper, peach, and root vegetables: turnips, carrots, and a beet

Explore: *Still Life with Vegetables* by James Peale: Ask, “Did I grow above ground or under ground?”

Read: *The Little Gardener (Teenie Greenies)* by Jan Gerardi

In the Garden:

Under the ground, roots are busy growing deep into the soil. While above ground, stalks and stems are working hard on producing fruits and vegetables. Tiny gardeners are able to see what grows above ground but they can't always imagine what lies below ground.

Questions to Explore:

- Where do you see roots?
- Can you smell a root?
- Can you touch roots?
- Do you see any above ground (like at the base of a tree)?

Activity:

1. Walk around the garden asking your gardener to describe what they see. Are there any buds on the flowers? Are vegetables growing?
2. Gently prod the dirt to see if you can see anything growing below.
3. After describing what you see above and under the ground, take out the vegetables you brought. Ask everyone to guess which things grew above ground and which grew below ground. Put them into two piles.
4. As our tiny gardeners may not have many words yet, let them touch and smell the different fruits & roots. See how they decide to sort the pile. Be sure to tell them what you see and smell so they will start hearing all those great descriptive words.
5. For a little extra fun, you can bury a few of the root vegetables and set the fruits on top of the soil. Pass a shovel to your tiny gardener and let them “harvest” roots and shoots.

Depending on the plant, you can eat almost any part of it from root to flower! Familiarize yourself with root veggies and start incorporating them into your evening meal. They're especially delicious during the cold winter months. Tiny gardeners are at a great age for trying new foods. They haven't made up their minds what they do and don't like yet so let them try everything (even dirt)!

Beyond the Garden | Math and Menus

Now that we know that roots are good for eating, let's find some delicious ways to eat more of them! One simple snack is to dip carrots in peanut butter: protein + veggies. If you would like to try a little math, there are a number of simple carrot recipes for kids. See below for some suggestions and eat up!

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Cooking: <http://cookingwithkids.org/>

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/eat-smart/cooking-with-kids/>