

Pumpkin Paradise

WHAT'S HAPPENING?



FALL

WHAT'S THE
Big Idea?
Cycles

Enduring Understandings

- All living things have needs.
- Food comes from nature: from plants and animals.
- Pumpkins, like all plants, have a life cycle.

Objectives

- Children show interest and curiosity in the life cycle of the pumpkin.
- Children discover that pumpkins make good eating.
- Children experiment with baking and measuring.

Directions

Grow pumpkins in your school garden, if possible. If not, visit a pumpkin patch so that each child can harvest a pumpkin of his or her own.

1. Ask the children where a pumpkin comes from: It grows on a plant. How did that plant grow? Challenge the students to figure out the life cycle of a pumpkin. Hand out the pumpkin life cycle cards to the students. Ask them to arrange themselves in order from seed to pumpkin pie.
2. After the group feels they are in the correct order, have them tell a story of a pumpkin seed growing up. Move from student to student, each describing the picture they are holding as a part of the story. When finished, students can color in their own pumpkin cycle and write (if appropriate) their own pumpkin life cycle story.
3. Read *The Pumpkin Circle* by George Levenson. Discuss the life cycle of the a pumpkin, and the different things you can do with pumpkins.
4. Show the children the pumpkins, and cut the top open. Have the children help scoop out the inside and harvest the seeds to roast and eat (see recipe on next page). Cook the pumpkin,

Materials

- *The Pumpkin Circle* by George Levenson
- pumpkins
- ingredients and equipment for making pumpkin muffins (see Recipe Card on next page)
- "Pumpkin Life Cycle Cards," (Appendix p.235)

Note:

FRUITS are defined as the part of the plant that develops from the flower after a flower has been pollinated. The fruit contains the seeds to start a new plant.

VEGETABLES are defined as any edible part of a plant that does not contain a seed. Vegetables are the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers of plants.



Extensions

- **The Pumpkin Circle: A Story of a Garden** by George Levenson



- “Weight Guess:” Find 4 or 5 pumpkins in a variety of sizes. Weigh each pumpkin and write the weight on the bottom in permanent marker. Have students pick each pumpkin up and estimate/guess how much each ways. For perspective and comparison, have a 5-pound bag of sugar and a pint of cream (weighs a pound) Have a sheet for each pumpkin for students to record each of their guesses. Gather together and weigh the pumpkins or peek underneath for the real weight and compare to their guesses.
- “Fruit Vegetable Sort:” Using a bag of groceries you have purchased at the store, sort the produce in piles of fruit or vegetable (see box on previous page). As you investigate each fruit or vegetable, cut them up to see if seeds are inside. End this activity with a taste test of what you have sorted.

remove the skin, and mash it.

5. Make pumpkin muffins with the children. Let the children experiment with measuring ingredients and stirring. Before beginning any cooking project with children be sure to review good hygiene.
6. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- Where do pumpkins come from?
- What came first, the pumpkin or the seed?
- What parts of the pumpkin can you eat? (*seeds, pulp, flower*)
- What do people do with pumpkins?

Pumpkin Paradise Muffins

Prep time: 15 minutes | Cooking time: 18–22 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ c. whole wheat flour
¾ c. honey or sugar
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
pinch of salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 c. cooked pumpkin
2 large eggs lightly beaten
½ c. canola or vegetable oil
1 c. plain or vanilla yogurt
or applesauce

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray muffin tins with cooking spray.
2. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt in large bowl. In a separate bowl whisk together pumpkin, eggs, oil, and yogurt. Combine wet and dry ingredients until just blended
3. Spoon batter into muffin tins until ¾ full. Bake for 18–22 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.
4. Transfer muffins to rack to cool.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Prep time: 20 minutes | Cooking time: 20–25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Pumpkin
2 Tbsp. olive oil
Salt to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 275°F.
2. Scoop the seeds out of a pumpkin. Remove as much of the pulp as possible.
3. Rinse the seeds in a colander, then dry the seeds with a paper towel.
4. Spread the seeds over a cookie sheet, sprinkle on the olive oil and add salt.
5. Cook for 20–25 minutes. Check often so they don't burn.