

Fresh Story | Peppers



Did you know. Although peppers might not be the first agricultural product that comes to mind when you think of farmers in Nova Scotia, many varieties are still grown across the province! Peppers are mostly grown in large greenhouses in southern areas of Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec as far as Canadian cultivation is concerned. Fewer are grown in Nova Scotia because it has a shorter growing season, and an overall cooler climate since we are beside the ocean.



Greenhouses are the most favourable Canadian growing method since they create a controlled environment with steady temperature, moisture and light sources. Growing in a greenhouse is considered to be an intensive method of crop cultivation. Many Nova Scotia farmers still elect to grow peppers outside during the summer months.

There are many different types of peppers, and each are used for different purposes in cooking. Similar to the tomato, peppers are classified as a fruit due to their development from a flower and production of seeds. For culinary purposes, however, they are a vegetable.

Bell peppers are what you might think of first when hearing the word pepper. They come in many colours and tend to be sweet in flavour. They are used in salads, stir fries, pasta sauces, and make a great snack uncooked and on their own.



Chili peppers are the other most popular type of peppers. There are many different varieties of chili peppers, including jalapeno, tabasco, and cayenne peppers. Many people would consider these peppers to be spicy, and their heat levels depend on the variety. Chili peppers are common in a wide array of cultural cuisines, such as Mexican, Thai, and Indian – to name a few.





Activities for P-3

ART – Students can be provided with a set of the four most common colours of bell peppers – green, yellow, orange and red. Students can then be asked by the teacher before eating their snack, to arrange their peppers in a rainbow shape. This can then lead into a discussion about colour and how we see different colours while students have their snack. Learners can create mandalas out of pepper pieces and any other foods available. Once made, the teacher can take pictures of the creations before they are eaten.

SCIENCE – Teachers can lead a discussion with learners about connections to peppers being a living thing. What makes peppers a living thing? Learners can draw the life cycle of a pepper from seed to harvest and examine the different stages of growth and what peppers need to grow.

MATH – Bell peppers can be cut into various shapes, such as a circle, a triangle, a square, rectangle, etc. and students can be asked to identify the shapes on their plate as they eat.

ENGLISH – students can investigate describing words to discuss peppers. The teacher can guide students through talking about things such as colour, smell, taste, feel, etc. and challenge students to come up with the most descriptive words they can for each category. This can also be done as a pair and share activity.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Teacher can introduce a cooperative tag game called pepper tag. They should review the way that a pepper looks when you cut it. When a student gets tagged, they should squat on the floor as the “center” of the pepper. Untagged students can allow students who have been tagged to return to the game when five of them surround the “center” of the pepper as the slices to create a whole pepper. They should not be tagged when they become a pepper slice, but once they become a pepper slice, they cannot leave the tagged student until they free them.

Activities for 4-6

SCIENCE – Students can host a “Sound Science Snack” break in their classroom, as they eat their bell peppers and discuss the various sounds they hear when eating them. The teacher can guide students through this discussion by asking things such as if the different colours sound the same, how it sounds at the start of chewing vs the end, or how it sounds to chew with your mouth open vs with your mouth closed. Learners can investigate what factors are necessary for optimum plant growth for a pepper, where do peppers grow best, and in what season do they grow best?

SOCIAL STUDIES/ENGLISH – Peppers are an extremely versatile vegetable that are used in hundreds of cultural dishes. As a class, students can research and brainstorm the various ways that peppers are used, stored and prepared in different cultures.

