



..... THIS MONTH
WE'RE HARVESTING

Broccoli!

In This Issue



AND MORE!

Farmer Spotlight

**RYAN KELLY - BOUTONNET FARMS
SALINAS, CA**



Whether steamed, roasted, or served fresh with dip, broccoli is a favorite vegetable on dinner tables across the country. Helping supply that fresh broccoli is Ryan Kelly, vice president and general manager of Boutonnet Farms

in California's Salinas Valley. Kelly oversees nearly 800 acres of broccoli and more than 1,600 acres of other brassica crops, including cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.

Kelly's career in agriculture started early. At 14, he spent his summers working on a local mushroom farm, where he discovered a passion for the industry that has shaped his future. After earning a degree in agricultural business from Cal Poly, he spent more than two decades growing vegetables. Through it all, one thing has remained constant: Every season brings something new. "Every year is a little bit different," Kelly said. "We face different challenges every year, whether it's weather, pests, disease, or markets. It keeps you on your toes."

In Kelly's operation, broccoli is typically grown from seed planted directly into the soil using precision air planters. These machines use air pressure to place seeds evenly and accurately. Planting begins in late October and continues for several months, allowing harvest to begin in late March and continue through Thanksgiving. California's mild coastal climate provides stable temperatures that help broccoli thrive throughout the growing season.

As the crop grows, Kelly and his team use technology to improve efficiency and quality. GPS-guided equipment helps manage tillage, irrigation, cultivation, and weed control. Some equipment can even identify individual weeds and treat only those plants, reducing the need for costly control measures. Growers also monitor for insect pests, especially diamondback moth larvae, which feed on broccoli leaves and developing heads.

Depending on the season, broccoli reaches maturity in 80 to 120 days. Harvest requires two or three passes through each field because plants do not all mature at the same time. Workers harvest the firm, dark green heads by hand before the broccoli is quickly packed, cooled, and shipped to grocery stores across the country. Much of Kelly's broccoli reaches major retailers, often packaged under store brand names, and can go from harvest to grocery store in as little as three to five days.

After harvest, the remaining portions of the broccoli plants are shredded in the field and incorporated into the soil. As the plant material breaks down, it adds organic matter and helps feed the microorganisms that cycle nutrients back into the soil for future crops. For Kelly, seeing the process come full circle is one of the most rewarding parts of farming. "To get a successful crop from start to finish and see it end up on someone's dinner table is something that's very satisfying."

FOOD for FUEL



Every crunchy bite of broccoli contains nutrients your body needs to grow, move, and stay healthy.

**HERE ARE SOME OF THE HEALTH BENEFITS
OF INCLUDING BROCCOLI IN YOUR DIET:**

Strong BONES

Broccoli contains vitamin K, a nutrient that helps your body build strong bones and keep them healthy as you grow.

Happy GUT

One cup of raw broccoli contains about 2.5 grams of fiber. Fiber helps keep your digestive system running smoothly and supports a healthy gut.

Body DEFENDER

Broccoli is packed with vitamin C, which helps your body heal and keeps your immune system strong.



BROCCOLI SALAD

Broccoli is delicious raw, and it pairs well with sweet cranberries, crunchy sunflower seeds, and creamy cheddar cheese. In this activity, students can make a simple broccoli salad while exploring how different flavors, textures, and colors come together to make a tasty dish.

Tools:

Cutting board, knife, large mixing bowl, small bowl, measuring cups and spoons, mixing spoon, whisk

Ingredients:

Salad

- 5 cups broccoli florets, chopped small
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup roasted, salted sunflower seeds

Dressing

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

(Adapted from superhealthykids.com)

Directions:

1. Wash your broccoli and other produce under running water.
2. Chop the broccoli into small, bite-sized pieces and place it in a large bowl.
3. Add the dried cranberries, red onion, cheddar cheese, and sunflower seeds. Stir to combine.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together the Greek yogurt, apple cider vinegar, honey, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper.
5. Pour the dressing over the broccoli mixture and stir until everything is evenly coated.
6. Serve right away or chill in the refrigerator until ready to enjoy.

Always check student information, especially allergies, before preparing or serving food to keep everyone safe.



CLASSROOM ★ Connection ★ From Seed to Plate

Have you ever wondered how broccoli gets from a tiny seed to your dinner plate? Growing broccoli involves much more than planting a seed and waiting for it to grow. In this activity, students will use information from the farmer spotlight from page one to follow broccoli's journey from seed to plate and create their own comic.

Materials: Farmer spotlight (page 1), worksheet (page 3), pencils, crayons or colored pencils, scissors, and glue or tape.

Procedure:

1. Ask students: "Where does broccoli come from?" Then ask: "What has to happen between planting a broccoli seed and eating broccoli for dinner?"
2. Explain that broccoli goes through many steps before it reaches a consumer.
3. Have students read the farmer spotlight about growing and harvesting broccoli. Ask them to look for details about how broccoli is planted, grown, harvested, packed, and transported.
4. Distribute the worksheet. Have students cut out the stages of broccoli's journey and put them in order: seed, growing plant, harvest, packing, transportation, grocery store, and plate. Students can use information from the farmer spotlight to explain what happens at each stage. Review the process together.
5. Tell students they will use what they learned to create a comic showing broccoli's journey from seed to plate.
6. Encourage students to use pictures and dialogue to show what happens along the journey, using details they learned from the farmer spotlight.
7. Have students share their comics with a partner. Ask: "What is one detail you learned about broccoli farming from your classmate's comic?"

Objectives:

Students will sequence the major stages in the journey of broccoli from seed to plate and use information from a farmer spotlight to create a comic that explains how broccoli is grown, harvested, and transported to consumers.

California Standards: NGSS: 3-LS1-1; CC
ELA: RI.3-5.1, RI.3-5.3, RI.3-5.7, W.3-5.3

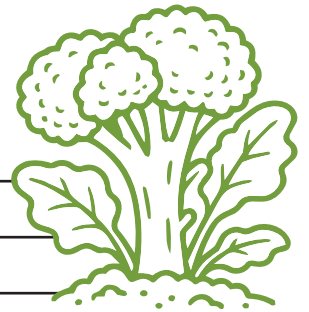
FOLLOW A BROCCOLI: From Seed to Plate

Read each description. Write 1-7 to show the order in which the steps happen.

- ___ Broccoli **arrives at stores**, where shoppers can buy it.
- ___ The broccoli plants **grow** in the field, developing large heads of green florets.
- ___ After making its way home, broccoli can become **part of a meal**.
- ___ After harvest, broccoli is **prepared and packaged** for its trip to stores.
- ___ When the broccoli is ready, farmers **harvest** the heads from the plants.
- ___ Broccoli **travels from the farm** to grocery stores, sometimes arriving just 2–3 days after harvest.
- ___ Broccoli begins as a tiny **seed planted** directly into the soil.

*How does broccoli
get from a seed to
your plate?*

What happens to the rest of the broccoli plant after harvest?



Create Your Broccoli Comic

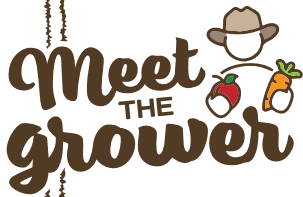
Now tell the story of a broccoli plant's journey from seed to plate. Use what you learned from the farmer spotlight. Add illustrations, narration, and speech bubbles to tell your story.

Don't forget!

- Who is speaking?
- How do they feel?
- What is happening?

Title _____

1	2	3
4	5	6



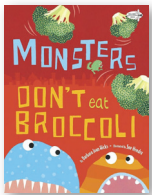
Have you ever wondered if broccoli and broccolini are the same vegetable? Meet Albert Alvarado, Field Operations Manager at Church Brothers Farms in Salinas, California. In this bilingual English and Spanish video, Albert explains how broccolini is different from broccoli, how Salinas' climate affects crop quality, and what it takes to harvest this unique crop.



DIG DEEPER

These books, websites, and other resources will help you and your students learn more about broccoli.

BOOKS



Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli

by Barbara Jean Hicks (Grades K-3)

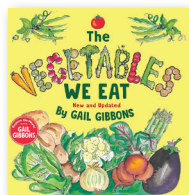
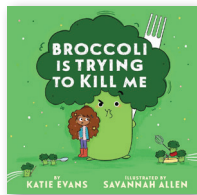
A humorous picture book in which a group of monsters insists they would never eat broccoli, even as they unknowingly gobble it up. The playful

book encourage children to look at vegetables in a new way and consider trying new foods.

Broccoli Is Trying to Kill Me

by Sarah A. Miller (Grades K-3)

This imaginative picture book follows a child who believes broccoli and other vegetables are plotting against him. Filled with humor and exaggeration, it provides an entertaining opportunity to discuss food preferences, healthy eating, and the importance of trying new foods.



The Vegetables We Eat

by Gail Gibbons (Grades 3-5)

This nonfiction picture book introduces readers to a variety of vegetables, including broccoli, while explaining how they grow and where

they come from. Clear illustrations and accessible text make it a valuable resource for exploring plant parts, agriculture, and the journey from farm to table.



WEBSITES

oceanmist.com

Learn about how broccoli is grown, harvested, selected, and stored from one of California's largest vegetable growers. The site also features nutrition information, recipes, and videos showing how broccoli is produced from field to table.

learnaboutag.org

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom provides free resources to teachers. The resources highlight many of California's 350 agricultural commodities, including broccoli.

taproduce.com/broccoli

One of California's leading vegetable growers, Tanimura & Antle provides information about broccoli production, nutrition, selection, and storage. Visitors can learn how to choose high-quality broccoli, explore growing practices, and discover tips for preparing it.

RESOURCES

Lesson Plan: Broccoli & Cauliflower (Grades K-4)

By Vermont Harvest of the Month

This lesson offers hands-on ways for students to explore broccoli and cauliflower. Activities include identifying the parts of the plant we eat, learning about broccoli's origins and plant family, and tasting and comparing broccoli and cauliflower prepared in different ways.

Lesson: Vegetables: Tops and Bottoms (Grade 3-5)

By National Center for Agricultural Literacy (NCAL)

Students investigate vegetables, including broccoli, to learn which parts of plants we eat, how vegetables are grown and harvested, and their nutritional benefits. Students can research broccoli's production, compare its nutritional value with other vegetables, and create a board game to share what they learned.



A Teacher's Guide to Farm to School Partnerships

Great things happen when classrooms and cafeterias work together! Discover resources and a special guide packed with creative ideas for partnering with your school nutrition program.

Download today at learnaboutag.org/farmtoschool