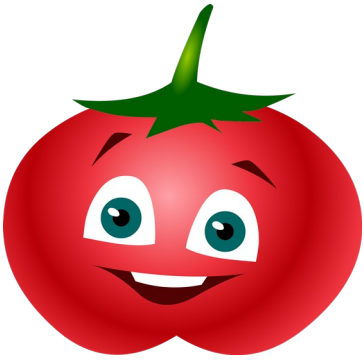


Tomatoes

Are They a Fruit or a Vegetable?



OVERVIEW: New Jersey is known for its tomatoes, which are the state's second largest crop. Jersey tomatoes are famous because unlike tomatoes that are shipped across the country, New Jersey tomatoes are grown for their taste, not their transportability.

GRADES: 3-5

OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to:

- Describe how most tomatoes are grown in New Jersey.
- Describe the tomato plant's life cycle.
- Describe some of the vitamins and minerals contained in this super food.
- Discuss whether a tomato is a fruit or a vegetable.

MATERIALS:

The book *From the Garden State to Your Plate, Farming Fruits and Vegetables in New Jersey*. A digital copy is available at: newjersey.agclassroom.org. There is a link on the home page under New Jersey Curriculum Resources.

The book *Fruit Bowl* by Mark Hoffmann

Optional: Tomatoes for a classroom taste test.

PROCEDURE:

Read and discuss the two-page tomato section in the book *From the Garden State to Your Plate, Farming Fruits and Vegetables in New Jersey*.

Use the map at the beginning of the *From the Garden State to Your Plate* book to show students where tomatoes are grown in the state.

Read and discuss the book *Fruit Bowl* by Mark Hoffmann to the class. Ask students: What is the definition of a fruit? What is a vegetable?

NOTE: *The botanical definition of a fruit is the part of a plant in which seeds develop. The botanical definition of a vegetable is any edible plant part that is not a fruit, such as roots, stems, leaves, flowers, or seeds. The culinary definition of a fruit is a fruit that tastes sweet. The culinary definition of a vegetable is any edible plant part that is savory, not sweet.*

Optional: Divide students into small groups to create a poster that answers one of the following questions:

- Where are tomatoes grown in New Jersey?
- Where do farmers plant most tomato seeds and why?
- Describe the life cycle of the tomato plant.
- What is the nutritional value of tomatoes?
- Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable?

EVALUATION:

Small group presentations of posters

Students write an informative paragraph about what they know about tomatoes: the life cycle, nutritional value, and when, where, and how they are planted in New Jersey.

New Jersey Learning Standards

Science: 3:LS1.B 4:LS1.A 5:LS1.C

English Language Arts: 3:W.3.2.A-D; W.3.4,8 4:W.4.2.A-E; W.4.4,8
5: W.5.2.A-E; W.5.4,8