

Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter



NATIONAL GARDEN MONTH

National Garden Month is observed every year in April and it is a time to celebrate the joy of gardening. This month is the perfect time to plant flowers, vegetables, and herbs, and create beautiful outdoor spaces. I encourage everyone to get outside and enjoy the benefits of gardening, such as exercise, stress relief, and connecting with nature.

This Month's newsletter gives tips on how children can participate in gardening and cooking at home and in a childcare setting. The "In the Kitchen" section includes a grilled garden veggie pizza recipe using ingredients that can be found in your garden.

Registration is open for the ServSafe class that will be held April 29th & 30th. This class is open to all foodservice operators!

Do you want to know what is happening with the Family & Consumer Sciences program over the next few months? For more information or to be on our email list about upcoming programs, send your email or mailing address to cpjohns5@ncsu.edu.

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Growing and Cooking Fruits and Vegetables at Childcare Centers

Local Foods: Childcare Center Production Gardens 1

This publication summarizes the benefits of fruit and vegetable gardening with children. It includes age-appropriate activities for childcare providers to engage young children in using fresh produce from a production garden for cooking and eating. This is the first of fifteen publications about childcare center production gardens.

Early childhood educators have an important opportunity to help create positive environments that connect with young children’s senses, allowing them to plant, grow, harvest, and ultimately prepare healthy eating experiences. Children develop healthy eating habits and food preferences at an early age. The more engaged children become with hands-on food education, such as gardening and food preparation, the more likely they will prefer and routinely consume fruits and vegetables.

Findings of the Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) Preventing Obesity by Design (POD) program emphasize the significance of gardening for engaging teachers and children in on-site food production. By incorporating a designated production garden in the outdoor learning environment, childcare centers can inspire lifelong healthy eating habits and can become models for the families they serve.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend a diet high in fruits and vegetables to lower risk for numerous chronic illnesses, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. For most Americans two years and older, specifically preschool age children, vegetable intake falls below CDC recommendations.

Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) Preventing Obesity by Design (POD) childcare centers recognize that a well-balanced eating plan containing fruits and vegetables can help children maintain a healthy weight. These centers have embraced and integrated growing, harvesting, and cooking with children into their daily curriculums.

GARDENING AND COOKING ABILITIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Classroom activities based on experiences with growing and cooking fruits and vegetables can help young children learn key developmental skills, including:

- Science skills: classification, weather, insects, soil, and plant life cycles.
- Math skills: counting, measuring, and weighing.
- Language skills: describing and comparing color, taste, and texture.
- Fine motor skills: mixing, spreading, and chopping.
- Cognitive skills: curiosity, cause-and-effect, and problem-solving.



Why is exposure to growing and cooking fruits and vegetables important for young children?

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend at least two servings of both fruits and vegetables each day.
- Essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber provided by fruits and vegetables may help prevent chronic diseases.
- Growing, preparing, and eating fruits and vegetables, from their own gardening efforts, can help children develop lifelong healthy eating habits.
- Participating in a full range of gardening from seed to tummy helps children understand the origins of food.



Little fingers loosening roots before planting.

Young children are curious and highly motivated to learn new skills like gardening and cooking. With adult encouragement in a safe, carefully prepared, and supervised environment, growing and cooking abilities can advance rapidly, aligned with age- appropriate activities:

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR TWO-YEAR-OLDS INCLUDE:

Gardening Cooking

- pushing child-size wheelbarrows
- scrubbing vegetables and fruits
- watering plants with help from a teacher
- carrying (unbreakable) items to the table
- pushing large seeds, such as beans and peas, into the soil
- dipping foods
- washing and tearing lettuce and salad
- observing insects and ripening greens
- produce
- breaking bread into pieces

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS INCLUDE:

Gardening Cooking

- mixing soil to prepare garden beds
- pouring liquids into batter (measured first)
- planting large seeds and seedlings
- filling up watering cans
- mixing batter or other dry and wet ingredients together
- watering plants
- shaking a drink in a closed container
- pulling weeds
- spreading butters or other spreads
- observing plant growth
- kneading dough
- comparing leaf shapes
- washing vegetables and fruit
- describing appearance of fruits and vegetables
- serving foods
- placing things in the trash after cooking or after a meal

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR FOUR- AND FIVE-YEAR-OLDS INCLUDE:

Gardening Cooking

- shoveling compost and mulch
- juicing oranges, lemons, and limes
- raking soil to prepare garden beds
- peeling some fruits and vegetables (bananas and even onions)
- planting small seeds and seedlings
- harvesting ripe produce
- mashing soft fruits and vegetables
- training and weaving vines onto a trellis or fence
- scrubbing vegetables (potatoes, mushrooms)
- collecting seeds
- cutting soft foods with a plastic knife (mushrooms, hard-boiled eggs)
- filling up watering cans
- pressing cookie cutters
- watering plants
- measuring dry ingredients
- pulling weeds
- cracking and breaking open eggs
- identifying garden insects
- beating eggs with an egg beater
- weighing produce
- stirring ingredients together
- comparing shapes and sizes of produce
- setting the table
- observing insects and birds
- wiping up after cooking
- drawing garden scenes or items
- clearing the table after a meal

Utensils required:

- Plastic cutting board
- Plastic knives for cutting
- Plastic measuring cups
- Stainless-steel or plastic bowls for mixing
- Plastic or wooden spoons for mixing

Children's books about gardening and cooking:

Muncha! Muncha! Muncha! by Candace Fleming, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2002

Plant a Little Seed by Bonnie Flemming, Roaring Book Press, 2012

Two Old Potatoes and Me by John Coy, Nodin Press, 2013

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert, HMH Books for Young Readers, 1987

How Groundhog's Garden Grew by Lynne Cherry, Blue Sky Press, 2003

Garbage Helps Our Garden Grow: A Compost Story by Linda Glaser, Millbrook Press, 2010

Grow It Cook It: Simple Gardening Projects and Delicious Recipes, DK Publishing, 2008

Rainbow Stew, by Cathryn Fallwell, Lee & Low Books, 2013

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and local food

If your childcare program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), you can use the funds for things like purchasing food from farmers' markets and planting edible gardens. Costs associated with growing food to be used in the meal service are allowable. These costs include such items as seeds, fertilizer, labor, and plot rental. See CACFP Financial Management Guide.



Pushing a seed into the soil of a raised planter.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING KIDS IN COOKING

- Create a fun and nurturing environment where children have many opportunities to see, touch, smell, and taste the fruits and vegetables they have grown in the garden.
- Focus on seasonal fruits and vegetables being harvested from the garden, those available locally in season, or both.
- Model tasting new foods. Children are likely to follow an adult example.
- Encourage children to taste the raw product first, then to taste the cooked product, reminding children that it may take multiple tastings to get used to new foods.
- Encourage young children to say “no thank you” when they do not like a new food, rather than “yucky” or another negative word. “Don’t yuck my yum!”
- Supplement harvest from the garden with items from the local farmers market when there is not enough for everyone to enjoy from the on-site garden.
- Make enthusiastic and positive comments about the taste and texture of the new food.

- Compliment and thank children for their care and attention in preparing the delicious food items.
- Lead a positive discussion about the food, including its taste, texture, smell, and color. Discuss how the food was prepared. Ask the children about the ingredients, the recipe, steps taken, and utensils used.
- Discuss appropriate serving sizes, which are smaller than for adults.
- Read children’s books that include cooking and gardening activities that can be referenced in the classroom.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Take special care with food safety. As immune systems are still developing, children are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses than healthy adults. Establish a rule that children thoroughly wash their hands after gardening, after using the toilet, before and after handling food, and whenever hands get dirty. Teach the following hand-washing protocol:

- Wet hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make lather and wash them well, including backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a single-use towel.

About the Local Foods series: Childcare Center Production Gardens

This publication in the Local Foods series is the first of eight publications about childcare center production gardens:

1. Growing and Cooking Fruits and Vegetables at Childcare Centers
2. Creating Childcare Center Production Gardens
3. Growing Warm-Season Fruits and Vegetables in Childcare Production Gardens (LF-007-03)
4. Growing Cool-Season Vegetables in Childcare Production Gardens (LF-007-04)
5. Snacking and Cooking with Warm-Season Produce from Childcare Production Gardens (LF-007-05)
6. Snacking and Cooking with Cool-Season Produce from Childcare Production Gardens (LF-007-06)
7. Composting in Childcare Production Gardens (LF-007-07)
8. Vermicomposting in Childcare Production Gardens (LF-007-08)



Gardeners working together to plant their summer garden.



Harvesting lettuce for a fresh salad.

Grilled Garden Veggie Pizza

Total Time: Prep: 30 min. Bake: 10 min



Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

- 8 small fresh mushrooms, halved
- 1 small zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 1 small sweet yellow pepper, sliced
- 1 small sweet red pepper, sliced
- 1 small onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 4 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh basil or 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- [tap here](#)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 prebaked 12-inch thin whole wheat pizza crust
- 1 can (8 ounces) pizza sauce
- 2 small tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese



From A taste of home

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine the mushrooms, zucchini, peppers, onion, vinegar, water, 3 teaspoons oil and seasonings. Transfer to a grill wok or basket. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 8-10 minutes or until tender, stirring once.
2. Prepare grill for indirect heat. Brush crust with remaining oil; spread with pizza sauce. Top with grilled vegetables, tomatoes and cheese. Grill, covered, over indirect medium heat for 10-12 minutes or until edges are lightly browned and cheese is melted. Rotate pizza halfway through cooking to ensure evenly browned crust.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

NC COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

**YADKIN COUNTY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
PRESENTS...**

SERVSAFE

**APRIL 29-30, 2024
YADKIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND
EDUCATIONAL BUILDING BANQUET
HALL**

**COST: FULL COURSE \$150 (INCLUDES BOOK, EXAM,
SUPPLIES, AND REFRESHMENTS)**

**EXAM ONLY \$100 (MUST PROVIDE PROOF THAT AN
ONLINE COURSE HAS BEEN TAKEN AND PASSED)**

TIME: 9:00AM - 4:00PM (CERTIFICATION EXAM ON SECOND DAY)

***REGISTRATION FEE CAN BE PAID IN PERSON FROM 8 AM-4:30 PM
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY AT 2051 AGRICULTURAL WAY, SUITE 201
YADKINVILLE, NC 27055**

****GENERAL REGISTRATION PERIOD FOR THIS
COURSE IS MARCH 11 - APRIL 19, 2024.****

***FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL CHELSEA JOHNSON AT
(336) 849-7877.**

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IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, N.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WILL HONOR REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE
ACCOMMODATIONS MADE BY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. PLEASE DIRECT ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS TO CHELSEA JOHNSON,
CPJOHNS5@NCSU.EDU OR 336-849-7908. REQUESTS CAN BE SERVED MORE EFFECTIVELY IF NOTICE IS PROVIDED AT LEAST 10 DAYS BEFORE THE
EVENT.

YADKIN FARMERS Market

MAY 7TH THROUGH OCTOBER 8TH

EVERY TUESDAY

3:00PM - 6:00PM

EVERY SATURDAY

9:00AM - 12:00PM

Location - 1141 Tennessee St, Yadkinville, NC

Seasonal items may include...tomatoes, strawberries, kale, spinach, blueberries, cucumbers, turnips, carrots, zucchini, onions, potatoes, squash, green beans, watermelons, cantaloupes, white/yellow corn, peaches, apples, local honey, beeswax candles, fresh apple and blueberry pound cakes, pineapple cake, pecan/coconut/German chocolate pies, blackberry cobbler, beef, pork, fresh eggs, craft items, and many hand crafted natural soaps

Accepting New
Vendors!!!



Contact: Kellee Payne
336-849-7908



Lunch & Learn
2nd Tuesday of the Month
12:00 pm EDT/EST



Come join us and empower yourself with information that is important to you.

January 9th	Meal Prep 101
February 13th	Happy Heart Habits: Steps to Better Cardio Health
March 12th	Cook with Ease: Tips, Tools & Gadgets
April 9th	Become A Scam Detective
May 14th	Embracing Wellness: Tips For Healthy Aging
June 11th	Eat A Rainbow

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION AT
[GO.NCSU.EDU/EXTENSIONATHOME](https://go.ncsu.edu/extensionathome) OR USE THE QR CODE

NC Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity provider.

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Monday - Friday ~ 8AM - 5PM

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