HARVEST OF THE MONTH ID SHEET: Cauliflower

Cauliflower is in the same plant family (Brassicaceae) as broccoli, kale, cabbage, and collards. It was discovered in Asia over 2,000 years ago. The head of the cauliflower is usually the only part of the cauliflower eaten; the stalk is usually discarded or used in soup. The head (sometimes called the curd) is actually made up of underdeveloped flower buds that are attached to the stalk.

White Cauliflower

- White is the most common color of cauliflower.
- Cauliflower is high in fiber, folate, water and vitamin C!
- Almost all cauliflower grown in the United States comes from Salinas Valley, CA and is grown between December and March.
- Cauliflower once looked like wild cabbage, which is how it got its name today. Cauliflower means “cabbage flower” (Caulis means cabbage in Latin).

Cheddar Cauliflower*

- Cheddar cauliflower, a variety of Orange cauliflower is often yellow-to orange colored
- Orange cauliflower has its color because it has extra beta-carotene in its florets. As a result, it has about 25 times more vitamin A than regular cauliflower!
- This variety comes began as a result of a naturally occurring mutation that first showed up in Canadian cauliflower.
- Orange cauliflower has a milder, sweeter, creamier taste than white cauliflower.

Purple Cauliflower*

- This cauliflower is purple because of the presence of the antioxidant group anthocyanin, which is also found in red cabbage.
- Purple cauliflower is only purple on the outside; the inside of the floret is white!
- This variety of cauliflower comes from Italy or South Africa (its true origin is still unknown).
- Purple cauliflower has a milder, sweeter, nuttier taste than white cauliflower.

*Due to inclimate weather you may receive either orange or purple cauliflower
HARVEST OF THE MONTH-Cauliflower Handling Directions:

Picking out the Perfect Cauliflower: Look for cauliflower where the heads are tightly packed. If the heads are spreading with space between the florets, it is a sign of poor quality. Avoid cauliflower heads that have brown on them.

Preparation: Remove the leaves and cut the florets into bite size pieces and wash under running water. Cauliflower can be eaten raw, and is tasty plain or with a dip. Cauliflower can also be steamed or stir-fried by itself or with other vegetables. It makes a great side dish or meal when mixed with a cheese or lemon sauce.

How to Conduct a Cauliflower Tasting:

1. Review Harvest of the Month Cauliflower Fact Sheet
2. Create a presentation detailing:
   a. Interesting Cauliflower Facts
   b. Cauliflower History
   c. Growth Cycle
3. Allow the students to see the Cauliflower before they are cut up.
4. Ask students to think about the differences between each Cauliflower variety, taking into account the differences in taste, smell, and appearance. Have students record or share their observations.
5. Have class share their thoughts on why they like each variety.
6. Have class participate in one or more Cauliflower-related activities. Easy to implement activities include: Poem Creation, Counting Activities, and Seed Diagram Creation.
Capay Fruits and Vegetables is truly a family farm. This 240-acre organic farm was started by Kathleen Barsotti in 1976, and is now owned and operated by her four sons. The boys were born and raised on this Capay Valley farm. After they went to college, they decided to follow in their mother’s footsteps and continue to farm the land they grew up on.

Capay Fruits and Vegetables was one of the first farms in the region to farm organically! Kathleen’s sons are committed to using good farming practices, which they plan to pass on to their children just as their mother passed it on to them.

Capay Organic grows over 50 different crops every year. Summertime brings tomatoes, melons, and peppers. Figs and table grapes are available in autumn, and mandarins, cauliflower, kale and chard come in winter, and mouth-watering peaches in the spring.
The History of Cauliflower
Cauliflower originated over 2,000 years ago in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. During the 16th century cauliflower made its way west and was grown throughout Western Europe, becoming popular in France and Northern Europe. Cauliflower is actually a descendant of the wild cabbage. Cauliflower actually means “cabbage flower” in Latin.

Cauliflower in the United States
Almost all of the cauliflower grown in the U.S. comes from Salinas Valley in California because it has a 10-month growing season with a moderate climate. Other states including Arizona, New York, Florida, Michigan, Oregon, Texas, and Washington grow cauliflower. You can find cauliflower all year long but it is most plentiful in the spring and fall.

How Does Cauliflower Grow?
Cauliflower plants like rich fertile soil with good moisture and cool temperatures, which is why cauliflower grows well in California. As cauliflower grows it forms a compact head of undeveloped flower buds. The heavy green leaves that surround the head protect the plant from pests. The dark leaves also protect the head from the sun. The lack of sun exposure does not allow the plant to develop chlorophyll, which is why some cauliflower is white! Cauliflower is usually grown from seeds that are started in a greenhouse. After 35 days the plants are strong enough to be transplanted into the field. After another 80-110 days the vegetable is ready for harvest.

Find Out More at:
http://www.panen.org/snap/cauliflower
http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov
www.panen.org/sites/default/files/cauliflower_bookmarks_022107.pdf
Roasted Cauliflower Recipe (from Simply Recipes)

Ingredients
1 head cauliflower
2-3 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced
Lemon juice
Olive Oil
Salt and Pepper
Parmesan Cheese

Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut cauliflower into florets and put in a single layer on an oven proof baking dish. Toss with garlic, lemon, oil, salt and pepper. Place in oven for 25-30 minutes until lightly brown. Remove from oven and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.
The Power of Pollination
Familiarize students with plant anatomy. Specifically flowers, their function and how they serve the rest of the plant.

Directions:
1. Draw a flower diagram on the board
2. Review the parts of a plant with the class.
   - Roots: Offer a base to support the plant and collect nutrients from the soil
   - Stem: Carries the nutrients and water to the rest of the plant
   - Leaves: Collect sunlight and turn them into energy.
   - Flowers: Reproductive part of the plant
   - Fruit: Contains the seeds
   - Seed: Allows the plant to reproduce.

Pollination
Male pollen lands on the female stigma, travels down the pistil, and fertilizes the female ovary. The fertilized egg develops into seeds that are enclosed in fruits that fall into the soil and then grow into new plants.

Pollinators
Pollinators can be anything that help spread flower pollen. There are all kinds of pollinators: birds, bats, bees, bugs, flies, beetles, and even wind.

Why are pollinators important to a plant?
Flowers can't move so they have evolved to find ways to make sure pollination takes place. Pollinators go from flower to flower to get food (nectar) and pollen. They get pollen on their legs or beaks and when they go to another flower to eat, they drop off pollen from other flowers. There are many ways flowers attract pollinators including: bright colors (pollinators see them as bright colorful landing strips), aromatic nectar (strong smelling), shape of flower that is designed for certain type of pollinator (audience), lightweight fluffy flowers for wind pollination.

Explain that cauliflower is actually the plants flower. What other flowers do we eat?

Acrostic Poem
Have students feel and smell the cauliflower before tasting it. Ask students to write down some adjectives describing the smell and feel. After tasting the different cauliflower have them right some adjectives to describe the taste. Have students use the adjectives to write an acrostic poem for cauliflower.

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<thead>
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<th>Awesome</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Flower</td>
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<td>Outside grown</td>
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<td>Enjoyable</td>
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<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>Rounded</td>
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