

Connecting Kids to Nature

Engage children in learning about the environment and the world around them with this hands-on activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's fun and educational!

Pass the Plants, Please

Every day, people and other animals eat many different kinds of plants and plant parts. Take a moment to think of all the different plant parts we eat. Examples include:

- Roots (carrots, parsnips)
- Leaves (lettuce, spinach)
- Stems, both above ground and underground (asparagus, onions, potatoes)
- Leaf stalks (celery)
- Flowers (broccoli, cauliflower)
- Fruits (apples, peaches, tomatoes, cucumbers)
- Seeds (wheat, rice, corn, pecans, walnuts, beans)

Tell children that you are going to begin a week-long project of analyzing their lunch! Use the chart below to keep track of meals for three consecutive days. You might challenge children to complete their lunch charts after school, which can be a fun exercise in memory and reflection. Alternatively, you might choose to analyze a family meal time, such as dinner, so you can track the plant parts consumed together.

ANALYZE YOUR LUNCH

MEAL LUNCH	EXAMPLE MONDAY	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
ENTRÉE	PIZZA (tomatoes, mushrooms)			
SIDE	FRENCH FRIES (potatoes)			
SIDE	SALAD (lettuce, carrots, cucumber)			
DESSERT	STRAWBERRY PIE (strawberries)			
DRINK	MILK			
TOTAL	7 plants			

On the final day of collecting data, discuss the results. Did some plant parts show up in meals more often? If so, which ones? How might this change from season to season?

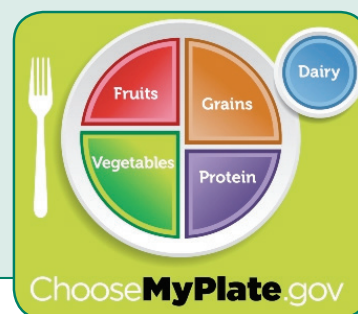
Encourage Your Child's School to Incorporate Environmental Education

For more activity ideas and materials:

- Attend a PLT workshop, www.plt.org/state-network/
- Visit shop.plt.org

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Review the components of a balanced meal and other helpful nutrition information at USDA's ChooseMyPlate.gov. Then try tracking your daily food group consumption using an accompanying iTunes app (\$0.99).



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

www.plt.org