

Six Seed Trail Mix

Description

Children mix a nutritious snack from a variety of edible seeds. This is a fun activity to do after planting, dissecting, or saving seeds out in the garden.

Recommended Grades

K-6

Background Information

When we eat a meal or snack, we often forget that we are consuming parts of plants: For example, carrots are roots, asparagus are stems, lettuce are leaves, broccoli are flowers, tomatoes are fruits, and peas are seeds!

In this activity, children get to think about six different foods that are seeds or contain seeds. The seeds in this trail mix are rich in protein, which helps our bodies grow and repair. Most of the seeds in this mix are especially nutritious because they do not have extra fat, sugar, or salt added to them.

****Safety tip:** Make sure you are aware of any food allergies in your class, and adapt the activity appropriately for allergic children.

Materials

Note: You might want to ask parents to help out by sending in some of the ingredients.

A few peanuts in the shell

Raw, unsalted, shelled peanuts

A few walnuts in the shell

Shelled walnuts

A few almonds in the shell

Shelled almonds

A few pumpkin seeds in the shell

Shelled pumpkin seeds

A few sunflower seeds in the shell

Shelled sunflower seeds

Optional: Chocolate Chips

Small paper drink cups
6 clean, large bowls or plastic containers for each station
6 spoons
Photos of some of these seeds growing on a plant

Preparation

Pour each type of shelled seed into its own bowl or container and put a spoon in each bowl. Arrange the bowls on a clean table and set out the paper cups. This creates a station that will work well for a group of about 8 students at a time. You can either bring up small groups to rotate through the trail mix station while the other students work on another activity, or you can set up multiple stations around the room so that everyone can make trail mix at once.

Activity

Have all students wash their hands carefully before beginning.

Show the children the different nuts and seeds in and out of the shell. *Is a nut a seed? You bet! The walnut is the seed of the walnut tree. The almond is the seed of the almond tree. What do you think would happen if we planted and cared for a walnut or an almond?* Ask them if anyone has seen a walnut growing on a tree, or if anyone knows how a peanut grows (underground on a plant). Listen to their answers and show them the photos of the seeds growing on the plants. Let them know that they will be making a snack made up of six kinds of seeds. Introduce each type of seed. When you get to the chocolate chip, ask them if they know where chocolate comes from. *Is it a seed? No, not exactly, but it does come from a cacao seed that has been roasted, ground up and mixed with sugar and fat to make chocolate!*

Invite children to visit the snack table(s) in small groups. Use this as a chance for students to practice their math:

- Grades K-1: Students can practice counting by adding 5 of each item to their cups.
- Grades 2-5: Students can practice counting by 2's, 3's, 4's or 5's as they add that number of items to their cup at each stop.
- Grades 4-6: While enjoying their snacks, students can calculate the probability of picking a specific item from their cups i.e. "If I close my eyes and pull out a seed with tweezers (so as not to feel what type it is), there's a one-in-six chance that I'll get a walnut."

Tying it Together

While students are enjoying their trail mix, talk about seeds with them. *Which seeds are you eating? Where do they grow on the plants? Why is it important to eat healthy snacks like these seeds? What other seeds do we eat?* Remember to include grains like wheat and rice, and legumes, like beans and peas, in your discussion. *Even a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is full of seeds!*

Digging Deeper

Send home the recipe for six seed trail mix and encourage families to make it for a school snack.

Try other variations of nuts and seeds in the mix.

After checking with parents regarding food allergies, try another seed snack— for example, crackers (ground wheat seeds) with peanut butter (ground peanut seeds), or corn chips (ground corn seeds) with hummus (ground garbanzo bean seeds). Popcorn is a seed too!