



★ SENSORY EXPLORATION

Colorful Beets, Inside and Out

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children describe the smell, feel, and color of beets.
2. Children use scientific inquiry skills to predict, observe, describe and compare beets.
3. Children learn that beets can have a different color or pattern on the inside versus on the outside.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Beets of assorted colors – red, orange, white. Try to include chioggia beets, which are striped inside. You can find these at most farmers markets when beets are in season (June-January). Include a mix of raw and cooked beets (steam, boil, or microwave, and let cool).

Plastic coverings for tables

Aprons or plastic garbage bags with holes cut out for head and arms

Lemons to help clean beet stains off hands

Plastic knives for children

Paper for beet stamping

Chart paper

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Tell the children that today we will be exploring beets, and children will have the chance to explore how this root feels, tastes, and smells.
- Ask children to put on aprons and explain that beet juice will stain clothing, so it is important to explore the beets on the table.
- Remind the children that vegetables grow above the ground and below the ground, and ask children: Do beet roots grow above the ground or below the ground? (Answer: the roots grow below the ground.)
- Talk about places you can find beets (on a farm, in a farmer's market, at a supermarket).
- Show children the different colors of beets. Have children guess what color the inside of the beet will be, and cut it open to reveal the color (this will be especially fun with the chioggia beets). Record children's predictions.
- Let children explore beets with cooking tools available.
- Talk with children about what they are seeing, smelling, and feeling. What words describe the feel of beets (hard, rough, smooth, slippery)? What does a beet smell like (sweet, salty)? How do cooked beets look, smell, and feel differently than raw beets? Do the different colors smell or feel differently?
- Help children wash hands, using lemon juice if needed. Explain that lemon can help remove the beet stains on their fingers.



BEET STAMPING

Red beets can stain hands, faces, clothing...and paper! It's no wonder they have been used as a natural clothing dye. Make use of this fun characteristic in a stamping activity. Supply children with paper and pieces of beet (cubes, grated, etc.). Stamp away!

