



A SWEET STRAWBERRY STORY

Every strawberry starts as a tiny bud inside a strawberry plant. It waits inside the mother plant all fall, all winter, and part of the spring. For all those months, a BC strawberry farmer takes careful care of the mother plant.

As the spring sun warms the ground, the mother plant blossoms with small white flowers. Hiding within each flower is a new strawberry.

The petals of the blossom fall off, and a strawberry starts to grow. The whitish berry first turns a yellowy-green as it ripens, then bright red.

About one month after the flower first appears, the strawberry is ripe and ready to be picked! Strawberries are so delicate that each one is picked by hand.



EAT IT OR SAVE IT, DON'T CHUCK IT!

One-third of all food produced around the world gets thrown away. That means that if a farmer grows 300 strawberries, 100 will go in the garbage instead of being eaten! What a waste of the hard work and energy that went into growing the food and getting it to you!

WILD TREASURES

Wild strawberries grow on mountain slopes all around BC. They ripen later in the summer than farm-grown strawberries, which are grown in valleys. First Peoples have harvested wild strawberries for thousands of years, using them fresh or dried, mixed into foods, and as tea.



WE ❤️ STRAWBERRIES!

Strawberries come in many shapes and sizes:

- Some are long.
- Some are short.
- Some are round.
- Some have bumps.
- Some are as long as your thumb.
- Wild ones can be as tiny as your fingernail.



They'll all taste sweet, as long as they're ripe. To choose the tastiest one, look for a deep red colour from top to tip.



The beginning of the strawberry harvest season coincides with the school year ending and summer holidays beginning. Naturally delicate, strawberries are a highly prized seasonal treat. Regardless of their size, shape, colour, or texture, all strawberries have value. Energy and resources were required to produce them, so we must value every strawberry harvested as food, even when it looks imperfect.

ACTIVITY: BE A FRUIT DETECTIVE

Curriculum Connection: Science - grades 1 to 3: Make and record observations. Suggest ways to plan and conduct an inquiry to find answers to their questions.

Play a blind taste testing game with your students. Have each student taste different strawberries. One that is red versus one that is slightly pink. One that is firm versus one that is slightly soft. One that is big versus one that is small. Discuss what they discovered.

Now that they've tasted a variety of strawberries, have them use their other senses to investigate. How do they smell? How many different kinds do they see? How do they feel?

Have your students draw their favourite kind of strawberry. Ask them to write about how their senses play a part in identifying their favourite strawberry's characteristics.

ACTIVITY: A STRAWBERRY CREATION

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts - grades 1 to 3: Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and make meaning. Create stories and other texts to deepen awareness of self, family, and community.

Pose these questions to your students: What would you do if you had too many ripe strawberries? How would you preserve this delicate, sweet-tasting fruit? Strawberries are used to make jams, blender drinks, stews, and other things, like medicines and even cosmetics. They can also be frozen or dehydrated.

Ask your students to use their imaginations to invent a new recipe or creation using strawberries. Create an instruction sheet by listing the steps, including illustrations.

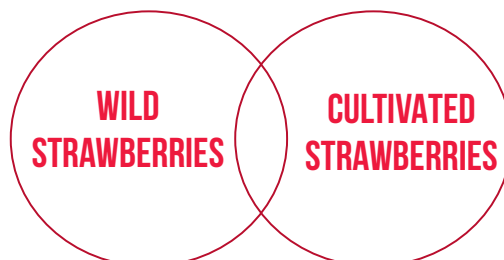
Extension: Now think beyond strawberries and design a project with the students on how they could reduce food waste in general, at home, at school, or in the community. Start by thinking small, like a sharing basket with extra lunch food, instead of throwing it away.

MATH QUESTION

Curriculum Connection: Mathematics - grades 1 to 3: Sort and classify data and information. First Peoples Principles of Learning: Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.

See if your students can ask an Elder about harvesting wild strawberries. Do wild strawberries taste the same as cultivated ones? Where do they grow?

Have students list the characteristics of both varieties on a Venn diagram, then have them discuss or journal their ideas on how wild strawberries might differ in taste from cultivated ones, and how they might have been used as an important part of First Peoples' diet, health practices, and ceremonies.



SWEET STRAWBERRY VOCABULARY

Blossom: the flower on a fruit tree, bush, or other plant that forms a seed or fruit.

Cultivate: to grow plants and crops on land.

Dehydrate: to remove water from a food to dry it.

Food waste: food that is thrown away, lost, or not eaten.



FAMILY CONNECTION

See the list of strawberry products in "A Strawberry Creation" above. Ask students what strawberry recipe they could make with their families. Maybe they could try making puffed pancakes with strawberries.