

Morning Announcements



Below you will find some interesting and engaging facts about different vegetables and fruit featured as part of the Northern Fruit & Vegetable Program at your school.

1. Start by introducing the fruit or vegetable
2. Then state a fact by selecting one listed under the fruit or vegetable heading

Example:

This week for the Northern Fruit & Vegetable Program, we will be having _____! (Then, list the facts)

Apples



- Ever wonder why you bob for apples and not bananas? That's because apples are made up of 25% air, which makes them the perfect fruit for the famous Halloween party game!
 - Did you know that there are over 7 thousand varieties of apples grown all over the world? Each type of apple has its own unique flavour and texture.
 - Apples grow in trees and are usually picked during the fall months. Did you know that apple trees can live to be about one hundred years old!
- On average, each Canadian eats around 86 apples per year. How many apples do you think you eat a year?
 - According to the Guinness World Records, the largest apple ever picked weighed 4 pounds! That's around the same weight as 6 cans of soup!

Clementines

- Clementines are the perfect snack! They are small, seedless, and easy to peel. Can you peel them all in one piece?
- Clementines were created in 1902 by a man named Clement Rodier, which is where the name *clementine* comes from.
- Clementines are often called *Christmas Oranges* because their growing season is from November to December and are common around the holiday season.
- Did you know that clementine is the smallest type of orange? Small but mighty and packed with flavour!
- In Canada, our climate is too cold to grow citrus fruit like clementines. Warmer countries such as Spain and China are much better at growing these tasty fruits.



Pineapple



- Looking to become a pineapple farmer? If you replant the top of the pineapple, it will grow into a new pineapple plant! Because Canada is a cold climate country, we are unable to grow them outdoors, but many people have successfully grown pineapples inside greenhouses.
- Think pineapples grow on trees? Think again! They actually grow on the ground. It takes up to 2 years for a pineapple plant to grow.
- Pineapple tastes the best at room temperature, as the fruit is juicier and sweeter.
- Have you ever taken a bite out of a piece of hard pineapple? One way to avoid this is by tugging on a leaf and if it comes off with little effort then it is ripe and ready to eat!

Grapes

- Did you know there are over 8 thousand types of grapes available across the world? Some are more popular than others and only a few types can be found in most grocery stores.
- Raisins are made by removing the water from grapes. You can make raisins at home by baking grapes in the oven at a low temperature to remove the water.
- Grapes are a delicious snack for humans to enjoy but may be harmful to dogs. Don't share grapes with your furry friends as it can hurt their kidneys.
- Did you know that a grape is a type of berry? They have thin skin and a fleshy inside, just like a blueberry.
- You can buy grapes from some grocery stores that taste just like cotton candy. They were invented by combining the genetic material of different grape varieties.



Strawberries



- Strawberries can be found growing in all ten provinces in Canada! They are harder to grow in colder climates- that's why you won't find any strawberry farms in the three territories (Nunavut, Yukon, Northwest Territories).
- Strawberries are unique as they are the only fruit with seeds on the *outside*. The average strawberry has 200 seeds on it! Have you ever tried counting them?
- Do you think roses and strawberries smell similar? Although they are two *very* different plants, strawberries and roses come from the same family. Now that's sweet!
- For some Indigenous Nations, strawberries are called the heart berry because of their shape. They are an important plant in many Indigenous cultures and teachings.

Cantaloupe

- Did you know that cantaloupe can grow in Northern Ontario? Canadian-grown cantaloupe is much sweeter than the variety grown in the United States because it stays on the vine for longer. Check out your local farmers' market for Ontario-grown cantaloupe near the end of the summer and see if you can taste the difference!



- Cantaloupe is one of the few fruits that goes by a different name in other countries: In Australia, they call it *rockmelon* and in the United States, it goes by *muskmelon*. Which name do you prefer?
- Cantaloupe flowers bloom from July to September. The yellow flowers attract honeybees which are responsible for the pollination of the cantaloupe plant. Plants that are not pollinated well by honeybees produce cantaloupe with an irregular shape.

Pears

- There are more than 3,000 types of pear varieties all over the world! How many pear types have you tried?
 - Although the famous holiday song “12 Days of Christmas” states that partridges live in pear trees, the birds are ground nesters and will likely not be found in a pear tree, so don’t get your hopes up!
 - Have you ever been given a hard pear? It doesn’t taste very sweet. Pears ripen best after being picked off the tree so if your pear is hard, just give it a few more days out at room temperature.



Honeydew Melon

- Honeydew melon, also known as honey melon, belongs to the gourd family which is the same family as squash, pumpkin, and cucumber.
- If you’re looking for a ripe honeydew melon at the grocery store, smell it! A ripe melon should smell slightly sweet and similar to the inside of a melon.
- Honeydew melon is the third most popular melon around the world. Watermelon takes first place and cantaloupe comes in a close second.



Blueberries



- Wild blueberries originated on Turtle Island (North America) and have been harvested for food and medicine for centuries by Indigenous Peoples. Blueberries are eaten fresh, but also dried and added to meat, stews, and other traditional dishes.
- The blueberry is one of the only foods that is naturally blue in colour. Can you think of others?
- Blueberries come in ‘low bush’ and ‘high bush’ varieties. This refers to the height of the plants. ‘Low bush’ varieties are wild and mostly grown in Atlantic Canada, whereas ‘high bush’ varieties are cultivated mainly in British Columbia. Wild blueberries also grow in Northern Ontario - have you ever picked some near you?
- The blueberry’s silver colour comes from a protective layer called the ‘bloom’. Wash the berries only when you’re ready to eat them, since this layer keeps the berries fresh.

Nectarines

- Nectarines get their name from 'nectar'. Nectar is a sweet fluid created by plants to encourage pollinators like bees to visit.
- What's one difference between nectarines and peaches? Their skin! Nectarines are smooth and peaches are fuzzy.
- Nectarines are a 'stone fruit' because of the large pit at the centre. Peaches, plums, and cherries are also stone fruit.
- Nectarines grow well in the Niagara Region of Ontario.



Broccoli



- The word broccoli comes from the word "broccolo" which is an Italian word which means flowering top of cabbage. Cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, kale, turnips, rutabagas, and Brussels sprouts all come from the same family.
 - Broccoli is a *cool-season* vegetable which means that it grows best during the spring or fall. It is usually harvested from October to December.
 - Over the past 25 years, broccoli consumption has increased by 940%- now that's a lot of broccoli!
- According to the Guinness World Records, the heaviest broccoli ever grown weighed a whopping 35 pounds! That's the same weight as a cinder block.

Cauliflower

- Bigger is better when it comes to cauliflower. The larger the vegetable, the better tasting cauliflower!
- Traditional cauliflower that we all know, and might love is an off-white colour, however you can find purple, green and orange cauliflower in some grocery stores!
- Cauliflower is well named because it really is a flower! The white part that we eat consists of a cluster of flower heads.
- Cauliflower stays white because the leaves growing around the head protect it from the sun which prevents the cauliflower from making a green pigment called chlorophyll.



Cucumber



- Do you think cucumber is a fruit or a vegetable? It's actually a fruit because it contains seeds to reproduce, but many people think of a cucumber as a vegetable because you usually eat it with veggies and salads.
- Are you a pickle person? Pickles are made by processing cucumbers with salt, vinegar and spices.
- Try adding some cucumber slices to a glass of water for a refreshing drink in the summertime. Don't knock it till you try it!

- Ever wondered where the saying “cool as a cucumber” comes from? It's because the inner temperature of a cucumber can be up to 20°C colder than the outside air. How refreshing!

Carrots

- You can buy Ontario carrots all year round. Farmers produced more than 482 million pounds in 2011— that’s more than the weight of the concrete in the CN Tower.
- Did you know that carrots are a root vegetable, meaning they grow underground? Most carrots are orange, but you can also find purple, red, white and yellow carrots!
- Baby carrots come from a larger carrot that has been cut, peeled, and tumbled together with other carrots to become a short, round-ended baby carrot. So, it’s a myth that *baby carrots* are *baby* carrots.



Celery



- Did you know that if you put a stalk of celery in a glass of water with food colouring, the celery will change colour? Try this at home or school for an easy science experiment.
- Here is a weird fact: To mimic the sound of breaking bones for TV shows and movies, people have been known to break stalks of celery as the sound is similar to a bone breaking...
- In the 1960’s, Jell-O created a celery flavoured gelatin mix to be used in Jellied salads. It is no longer sold, so don’t get too excited!
- While peanut allergies are most common in North America, celery allergies are the most common type of allergy in Europe!

Tomatoes

- I’m sure everyone has had a snowball fight before, but have you ever had a tomato fight? The biggest tomato fight happens each year in a very small Spanish town. The festival involves over 40 thousand people throwing 150 thousand tomatoes at each other. You can imagine tomatoes are a little harder to clean up compared to snowballs!
- What do ketchup, salsa, and pizza sauce all have in common? Tomatoes of course! What’s your favourite tomato product?
- According to the Guinness World Records, the heaviest tomato ever grown was 8 pounds! That’s around the same weight as a newborn baby!



Sugar Snap Peas

- Sugar snap peas are plump little pods that grow from a vine. Each pod contains round peas. Unlike other peas, the whole pod can be eaten so they’re great for dipping!



- Ever wonder why the colour of canned peas is so different from the bright green fresh ones? It's because during the canning process, the peas are heated up to a very high temperature which causes the bright green colour to fade into its famous *pea* green colour, similar to the North Bay Battalion's jerseys!
- Only 5% of peas grown across the world are sold fresh, the remaining 95% are either canned or frozen to increase the shelf life.

Bell Peppers

- Did you know that green and red bell peppers come from the same plant? As bell peppers mature, their colour changes from green to red and become sweeter. That's why red peppers are sweeter than green peppers.
- Paprika is a dried spice made from grinding the dried pods of bell peppers.
- Bell peppers are the only member of the pepper family that do not contain capsaicin (pronounced cap-say-sin), a compound that causes a hot taste when it touches your tongue.
- You can find green, red, yellow, orange and even purple bell peppers! Green is better for cooking while the colourful ones are tasty raw. What's your favourite kind?

