



PUT LOCAL ON YOUR TRAY



SUMMER MEAL ACTIVITY

Zucchini Seed Germination Experiment



Activity Information

Grade Level: 3rd-6th

Objective: students will learn the meaning of germination and know what environmental factors affect germination

Materials: Garden bed, zucchini seeds, cotton balls, small plastic sandwich bags (1 per student), water dropper

Time: 10 min prep + 40 min lesson

Credit: Adapted from FoodCorps and NC State

1. Open with a question about germination- what is it? What do seeds need to grow into plants?
2. Prepare a growing space for planting seeds (before lesson), have students plant zucchini seeds based on the instructions on the back of the seed packet.
3. Ask students if they think the seeds will grow there? Do they think the seeds would grow if they were just in a bag, or somewhere else?
4. Move students into a space where they can sit as a group- ask students if they think* the seed will germinate (grow into a plant) if it was only in their own hands, with just water. *Have them record their predictions if they have a science journal
5. Have the students hold one hand out, add a zucchini seed, and out a few drops of water onto it. Let the seeds sit in the students' hands for about 2 minutes.
6. What happened to the seeds? *The seeds should have turned white, and look fuzzy- the white fuzzy coating is the seed coat breaking off.* What do students think will happen now that the seed coat is gone? *The seed should start to grow into a plant!*
7. Pass out one cotton ball and one small plastic sandwich bag to each student. Have them add water to the cotton ball, put it in the bag, and then put seeds in the bag.
8. Students can take the bags home to observe them, or, they can keep them at school or the summer meals site and come back and observe them each day.
9. Based on this experiment, what do students believe that plants need the most to germinate? *Water.*
10. Other questions to ask- what would happen if the bags were taped to the window vs. put in the closet? Which seed would more likely germinate?

Make it shorter: Give each child 2 plastic sandwich bags, with a wet cotton ball in each. Have students place a few zucchini seeds in each bag. Have the students label one bag "light" and one bag "dark." Keep the "light" labeled baggies taped to a window near the summer meals site, or hang them on the fence of the school garden. Keep the "dark" labeled seeds in a closet or dark space. Have the students keep track of their progress when they come back for the summer meal each day.