Growing Food

Learning Indicators:

Observation; performing activities; recording and discussion

Learning Objectives:

- To help children observe and experience growing food on their own
- To help children understand and appreciate the organic way of growing food

Level: Class 4, 5

Subject: Environmental Studies



The food we eat comes from various sources – among them, plants are the largest group of sources and our primary food producers. Can you think of the food items we get from plants?

You may have observed that there are many kinds of plants which give us different types of food. For example, we get mangoes or guavas from a mango or a guava tree, which are huge in size; we get tomatoes from a tomato plant, which is far smaller in size. Some plants provide us their leaves as food (spinach, fenugreek for instance), while we eat the roots of others (like radish, carrot)

Let us explore more about the food which grows on plants around us.

Activity 1: Food plants

For this activity, you need to choose an area (for example, the kitchen garden in your home or school, or a park in your neighbourhood). With the help of your teacher or guardian, try to list the trees or plants growing in that area which give us food.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Share this list with your friends and discuss the variety of food plants that you found.

Activity 2: Grow a food plant

Plants grow from seeds. You can also grow a plant from a seed, and see it bear fruits. Would you like to do so?

Let us carry out another activity of sowing a seed and seeing a plant grow in a small flower pot or a garden near in your house or school.

Take some seeds from the fruits or vegetables you eat. It is good to take one seed at a time. Sow the seeds in the soil – make a small hole, place the seed in it, and cover the hole with soil. Make sure that the soil is wet: add water to keep it moist. You will soon see the plant

emerge out of the seed and grow day by day.

- Record your observations and maintain a diary entry of the changes you observe every day.
- You may include colour, size, shape, etc. as the parameters for observation.
- Draw pictures of what you see.
- Try to include what you did to help the plant grow (for example added water, removed any dirt, etc.).
- Discuss the daily findings with your elders to understand the process better.
- Remember to also observe the insects, small animals or birds which visit your plant and make a note of their activity.

The experience of growing a plant tells us that a lot of effort and care is needed to make sure the plant is healthy. Farmers grow food for us in large fields. Imagine the amount of hard work and resources it requires to grow so many plants. There are many challenges, such as lack of nutrition in soil or attacks by harmful insects or pests. To keep the soil fertile and to prevent insects and pests from harming crops and plants, farmers use chemical fertilisers and pesticides. These chemicals, which are toxic, can usually be very dangerous for our health and environment.

But there is a natural way (chemical-free) of farming too. You guessed it right – it is organic farming! Naturally prepared manure (from various sources such as food waste, dried leaves, cow dung, etc.) is added to the soil to build up its fertility.

Have you heard of organic farming being practised in your area?
Let us carry out a small survey and generate awareness about organic farming.

Activity 3: Organic food products

Meet a few neighbours or teachers and ask questions (as mentioned in the table below – you may add more questions) about organic farming. Record the responses and discuss them in your class.

S.No.	Name of the person surveyed	Have you heard of organic farming? (Yes/No)	Do you eat organic food? (Yes/No)	Give reason for your response
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Realising the benefits of organic food products, many farmers are now practising organic farming. As these farmers do not need to handle chemical fertilisers, it helps them stay healthy. In Sikkim, all the farming is done organically!

It is important to be aware of what we are eating. This will help us in increasing consumption of organic food which is environment friendly.

