

Topic: Herbs for making tea

Description: Students will harvest and identify culinary herbs, talk about their uses, and make herb tea

Time needed: About 1 hour

Materials

- Scissors or clippers for cutting herbs
- Colander for collecting and washing herbs
- Pot full of hot water (prepared ahead of time)
- Teacups & tea strainers, bags, or small coffee filters
- Paper towels
- Plants – e.g., spearmint, peppermint, chocolate mint, basil, lemon balm, lemon verbena

Steps

- Explain activity and steps
- Go over safe use of tools
- Pass around plants, encouraging students to touch, smell, taste
- Point out identifying features (e.g., leaf and stem shapes, sizes, aromas, growing habits)
- Demonstrate harvesting techniques that support a plant's continuing growth after harvesting
- Decide how much to harvest (a handful of fresh herbs will make a good cup of tea)
- Collect cuttings in colanders and wash
- Place strainers in cups, fill with plant cuttings, and add hot water.
- Note how to use finger on edge of cup to know when it's full
- Steep tea for 5 – 6 minutes before removing strainer
- Discussion (see topics below)
- Cleanup

Discussion topics, other ideas:

- Uses of herbs – e.g., medicinal, aromatic, culinary
- What's enjoyable about sharing a cup of tea with others?
- Notice how plants smell, feel, taste; notice similarities and differences.
- If you collect too much, tie up the extra with string to dry.
- If time, do a taste test, comparing, for example, tea made with dried herbs vs. fresh herbs, or with different herb combinations
- Nutrition info: Mints contain vitamins A and C, as well as calcium, iron, and other trace minerals, and a small amount of sodium; no fat, sugars, or cholesterol