

Activity: Food/Cooking Goal: Sensory Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Citrus Tasting

Text by Trish Hildinger, HTR
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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participant(s) will prepare and smell and taste a variety of citrus and compare/contrast them.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn about citrus growing requirements and production in the USA

Physical: Practice fine motor skills peeling and separating citrus

Psychological/Emotional: Discuss things in our current lives that may be bitter or sweet

Sensory: Engage olfactory (smell) and gustatory (taste) senses

Social: Work with partner; participate in open class discussion

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials.
2. Facilitator begins session by introducing citrus varieties on hand. Discuss history, production, and growing conditions and favorites among participants. Have they ever grown citrus, if so what?
3. Pick one variety of citrus and have participants use knife or zester, so each person has a piece. Smell. Have participants respond with a thumbs up, down or neutral sign.
4. Peel or cut citrus and taste. Respond with thumbs up down or neutral.
5. Repeat with each variety of citrus.
6. Report back to all with overall favorite in taste.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Originally delivered as an HT/TH activity for elders and memory care residents. The focus was sensory and stimulating memories of childhood use/care/planting of citrus, as well as cognitive functioning by learning about the history and origins of citrus. The health/nutrition benefits of citrus were also discussed. Discussion of taste buds and how we may differ from one another can lead to discussion of perceptions.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Pre-session determination of participants with swallowing, allergy or contraindications with medication especially for grapefruit is essential. Use of knives or zesters may not be appropriate for all populations and may need to be used only by facilitator. Proper food handling protocols are imperative. Give each participant their own piece for smelling and tasting.

Materials

3-5 different kinds of citrus

Live citrus plants if possible

Cutting board (s), knife(es)

Food handler gloves, wipes

Small plates/napkins

Pictures and historical information about citrus

Local citrus information on production import/export

Optional: hand magnifiers, hand juicer, small cups, zester

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: This activity can be expanded into math skills with graphing. Smell, color and texture can be noted as well as taste with an option of a blind taste test. Can work with similar types of

citrus (mandarin, orange, tangerine) or dissimilar types. Therapeutic goals of strengthening manual dexterity can be incorporated by using a zester or hand squeezing juice for drinking or other cooking activity. Zest can be saved and dried for future potpourri.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

<https://www.nass.usda.gov/> (USDA statistics)

<https://citrusindustry.net/> industry magazine on citrus

<https://www.fourwindsgrowers.com/> descriptions of varieties of citrus

<https://thewholeu.uw.edu/2022/05/23/citrus/> health benefits of citrus

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.