

Activity: Propagation Goal: Cognitive/Intellectual Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Growing Garlic

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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will propagate & grow garlic over a 10 month period.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn about the stages of plant development from planting to harvest

Physical: Maintain fine motor skills

Psychological/Emotional: Explore concepts of self-care, healthy lifestyle

Sensory: Improve nutrition as a healthy lifestyle choice; explore gustatory sensory stimulation

Social: Discuss nutritional benefits of garlic & research on its role in cancer prevention

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Plan appropriate time of year to plant garlic in the ground &/or consider indoor container planting year-round.
2. Leader presents several varieties of garlic (full cloves) to group, to examine/compare, smell and discuss the history of this plant including nutritional and healing properties.
3. Group makes several flavors of hummus using fresh garlic.
4. Each participant plants several garlcs in container, to be nurtured at home or transplanted into home garden.
5. On-going discussions, observations of garlic growth (with a sample at program delivery site & home gardens) occurs over the 10 month growing season.
6. For programs with shorter duration, activities can include cutting and cooking pre-planted garlic scapes or harvesting as one stage of plant care.

Materials

variety of garlcs
hummus ingredients
potting medium containers
gloves, wipes

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This activity is appropriate for most populations and can be done indoors or outdoors. A focus on the nutritional value may be particularly appropriate for some groups including people with cancer, chronic disease and those concerned about food insecurity. The activity can cover a wide range of horticulture topics from planting, following the stages of plant development through the planting-harvesting cycle, nutrition and tasting fresh plant produce, lifestyle choices and self-care.

Therapeutic goals also can offer a wide range of domains across populations including cognitive/intellectual investigations re nutritional health benefits, gustatory focus addressing dysfunction of taste, strategies for stimulating a desire to eat, taste as a predictor of other health issues like eating disorders, neurological disorders or depression and [chemosensory dysfunction](#). (Fleming, 2022). Life skills focused on using and cooking nutrient

dense foods like superfood garlic can address eating issues experienced by people with eating disorders, cancer patients and seniors.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Participant sensitivity and allergies to garlic and edible ingredients in hummus should be determined prior to activity. Excessive consumption of garlic can cause some side effects, in addition to strong breath and body odor. Allergies to garlic can range from irritation to nausea. Garlic can interfere with some prescription drugs. Pregnant women, people about to undergo surgery and those using blood thinners may want to avoid consuming raw garlic. For cancer populations or those with compromised immune systems, sterilized soil-less potting medium and gloves should be used for the propagation activity.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Options for garlic activities shorter in duration than 10 weeks can include making and tasting garlic in hummus, planting garlic as a single activity, or visiting a garden to examine garlic production. Extended projects can include research on nutritional benefits of garlic, annual ritual of planting garlic crop, Halloween garlic-vampire folklore, braiding of [garlic scrapes](#) or garlic foot baths.

“Garlic, a member of the *Allium* family, like leeks, chives and shallots, is considered easy to grow. It is one of the world’s most common condiments, also used as medicine throughout the world.

There are [two sub-species of garlic](#) - softneck (*A. sativum* var. *sativum*) and hardneck (*A. sativum* var. *ophioscorodon*). The latter has several varieties: porcelains (longest storing with white wrappers and large cloves), rochamboles (excellent raw earthy flavor), Persian Stripes (rich sweet flavour often used for roasting), and elephant (not really garlic, rather a leek, with mild flavor)”.

Excerpt from Fleming & Morrison, 2021



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Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

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