

HELLO MINIS! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

Mini tomatoes aren't just baby tomatoes. They are a special variety of tomato plants that produce very small fruit. There are several different types of mini tomatoes, and each one has its own name: Grape, Cherry, and Gem.

Mini or big, all tomatoes grow to their full size before they ripen. So, when growers harvest bright-red mini tomatoes, they know the tomatoes are as big and ripe as they'll ever be.

GROWING FRESH TOMATOES IN ALL FOUR SEASONS



Greenhouse tomatoes get their start as seeds planted in early October in special growing greenhouses: tomato nurseries. Inside the nursery greenhouse, it's as warm as a summer's day.



By December, the seedlings are sent to greenhouses across BC. In their bright, warm houses, the plants grow into vines that climb up wires, while bees pollinate their flowers.



By early spring, the plants are producing tomatoes. Growers harvest from March right through November, so you can have fresh, BC-grown tomatoes in spring, summer, winter, and fall!

FROM GREENHOUSE TO YOU – FRESH AND SAFE TO EAT

In the Greenhouse ...

- Workers walk through a special boot bath before entering to sanitize their shoes.
- Workers test the water they feed the plants to make sure it is clean and has the right mix of nutrients.
- Workers sanitize their hands and tools.

In the Packing House ...

- Workers wear gloves, special clothing, and hairnets.
- Workers sort through every tomato as one bruised or cut tomato can spoil a whole box.
- Workers keep all the equipment and machinery clean.
- Workers cool the tomatoes as soon as they're picked to slow down ripening.

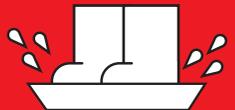
All the Way to You ...

- Refrigerated trucks keep the tomatoes cool and fresh as they transport them to grocery stores and schools.



WANT TO VISIT A GREENHOUSE? SUIT UP!

Greenhouse growers are very careful about "biosecurity": keeping their crops free from plant diseases and pests that could catch a ride into the greenhouse on people's clothes, skin, or shoes. You can visit a greenhouse as part of a tour, but you'll need to wear special clothing: hairnets, plastic boot covers, and sometimes long coats that cover your outdoor clothes.



Greenhouse growers work hard to produce bright-red, sweet, and tangy tomatoes. BC greenhouse-grown tomatoes require close monitoring through all stages of their development and processing so that consumers receive a fresh and safe product. If you're in the Lower Mainland, did you know that you can visit a greenhouse with your class in celebration of BC Greenhouse Veggie Days? For more information, see www.bcgreenhouse.ca/bc-veggie-day/ag-in-the-classroom

ACTIVITY: MY TOMATO TOOK A TRIP

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts - grades 1 to 3: Use developmentally appropriate reading, listening, and viewing strategies to make meaning.

Teachers: this activity is an adaptation of the song, "I Took a Trip."

Review "From Greenhouse to You – Fresh and Safe to Eat" on the student side of the sheet with your class, then discuss what steps it takes to get tomatoes safely from greenhouse gate to their dinner plate. Then, have the class sit in a circle, with one student holding a paper cut-out of a tomato. Start the song with the following frame: "My tomato took a trip, from greenhouse gate to my dinner plate, and along the way it saw _____" (e.g., "hairnets"). After the first student completes their turn, the tomato is passed to the next student. Start the song again, with the next student adding an additional ending (e.g., "hairnets and refrigerated trucks"). Each student will repeat the sequence of objects until someone misses one or cannot fill in the ending. Then, a new trip can be started for the tomato.

ACTIVITY: "AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE" (BENJAMIN FRANKLIN)

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts - grades 1 to 3: Stories and other texts help us learn about ourselves, our families, and our communities. **First Peoples Principles of Learning:** Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Share some examples of how your students' daily behaviours could impact their health. For example, tie your shoelaces so you don't trip, or wear a hat so you don't get a sunburn. On a piece of paper, ask students to list some other examples of preventative actions that could keep them safe and healthy. On the other side of the paper, ask them to list how greenhouse farmers take preventative actions to keep their tomatoes safe and healthy, as well as what actions they would have to take if they were to visit a greenhouse.

MATH ACTIVITY

Curriculum Connection: Mathematics - grades 1 to 3: Regular increases and decreases in patterns can be identified and used to make generalizations. **First Peoples Principles of Learning:** Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Ask your students to imagine they are chefs and to create an edible pattern using mini tomatoes that are whole, cut in half horizontally, and cut in half vertically. Have them record their pattern using letters. For example:

Whole tomato = A
Horizontally cut tomato = B
Vertically cut tomato = C

Pattern: A,B,A,C A,B,A,C A,B,A,C

Can they find someone else's pattern that matches theirs? How many patterns do they think they can make?

If their pattern repeated 4 times, what would the second item be?
A,B,A,C A,B,A,C A,B,A,C A,__,A,C

How could they change it to an increasing pattern?
A,B,A,C AA,B,AA,C AAA,B,AAA,C

How could they change it to a decreasing pattern?
AAA,B,AAA,C AA,B,AA,C A,B,A,C

Ask students to think of examples of patterns in their day-to-day lives (e.g., counting, songs, knitting, sewing, graphs, animal markings, etc.).

TASTY TOMATO VOCABULARY

Biosecurity: a set of steps designed to protect a farm from the entry and prevent the spread of pests and diseases. Biosecurity is the responsibility of the farmer as well as every person visiting or working on the farm.

Food Safety: the proper handling, storage, and preparation of food in order to protect people from possible germs in food products.

Prevention: an act or practice to keep something from happening.



FAMILY CONNECTION

Ask students how they keep their homes safe from germs. What actions do their families take to make sure their food is safe to eat?