Cooperative Extension’s Ability Garden presents

Making Lemonade by Hand

Making lemonade is a great way to get participants touching, smelling and tasting their way through a nature-based activity. The rolling of lemons can work muscles and the energy put in at the start makes the end product seem that much tastier. Using a variety of juicers means that participation is possible at every level. Comparisons between lemon-scented plants like lemon balm, lemon verbena and lemon-scented geranium make for an ‘eyes-wide-open’ kind of session.

Precautions: Lemon juice is acidic and will sting if rubbed in eyes, cuts and sores. Remain mindful of skin sensitivities and the potential for strong smells to be negatively perceived by some individuals.

Target population: 4 years to adulthood

Activity Treatment Goals: Goals and outcomes can be tailored to different populations and individual participants and can include:

- Promotes use of gross and fine motor skills
- Promotes increased cognitive awareness
- Provides an opportunity for social interaction
- Promotes sensory stimulation and awareness
- Practice communication skills

Completion Time: 45 – 60 minutes
Materials Needed: You will need the following materials to complete this project:
- Lemons
- Pre-made sugar syrup (see recipe below)
- Cutting board and knife
- Large pitcher to mix ingredients
- Variety of juicers: electric, reamer, old-fashioned, etc
- Bowls or jars to catch juice
- Fruit bowl
- Strainers to remove pips
- Measuring cup
- Ice / refrigerator
- Cups
- Materials to clean up work spaces at end of program
- Wet wipes or hand wash station

Pre-session Preparation:
You will want to do the following before the activity begins:
- Make up the sugar syrup prior to the group. In a large saucepan, heat 1-1/2 cups of sugar and 1 cup of water over medium-high heat, until sugar dissolves. Sprigs of mint can be steeped in the liquid as it cools. Chill syrup before mixing with juice.
- Wash lemon in warm water to remove dirt and waxy coating.

Step-by-Step Instructions:
Exploring the smells and textures of lemon-scented plants like lemon balm, lemon verbena and lemon-scented geranium helps develop participant involvement and social interaction. Comparing lemons with other citrus fruit can help promote verbal communication as participants highlight differences in size, shape and color.

1. Wash hands with soap and water (wet wipes are an alternative).
2. Roll/ pass uncut lemons to each participant, demonstrating how to massage the fruit and soften the pulp. Roll, squeeze or press lemons until they feel soft and juicy inside. Smell the lemon oil that has rubbed off onto your hands!
3. Collect lemons in a fruit bowl and bring to the cutting board. Carefully cut lemons in half and demonstrate how each juicer is best used.
4. Pass out lemon halves and juicers, asking participants to take turns, sharing time with the electric juicer.
5. Collect juice, strain out pips (these can be saved and planted as a separate activity) and measure 1-½ cups of juice to be mixed with syrup.
6. Combine juice, syrup and 6 cups of water. Refrigerate until cool or pour over ice. Stir well and taste.
Enrichment Opportunities:

- Lemon seeds can be saved, washed and planted. Many lemon trees are grafted onto root stock these days but plants will sprout and grow. Plants may not give fruit or not for many years but it allows you to discuss lifecycles/what seeds need to sprout (germinate): water, light, soil.
- Discuss basic plant care needs. Lemon trees will not tolerate temperatures below 45°.
- The exact origin of the lemon remains a mystery, but it may have been India or China. Lemonade may have originated in medieval Egypt. Discuss plant origin and natural hybridization.
- There are a variety of culinary and non-culinary uses for lemons and lemon juice including as a mood enhancer, lemon-juice-powered battery and hair lightener. Try some!

Performance Areas:

- Sensory: This activity presents the opportunity for a wide range of sensory stimulation: color, texture, fragrance, taste, hot and cold sensations, etc.
- Education: Making a popular beverage provides the opportunity to learn where our food comes from, identification of necessary ingredients and utensils, proper usage of utensils, mathematical concepts.
- Vocation: This activity presents a wonderful opportunity for learning a wide variety of daily living skills, following directions and using tools and utensils.
- Rehabilitation: This activity presents an opportunity to practice gross and fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and sequencing multi-step instructions.
- Leisure/Recreation: The activity fosters sharing, partnering, taking turns, social skills, laughter and fun.

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