

# Dirt Made Our Lunch

Adapted from "Got Veggies" Curriculum



## Overview

Students will be introduced to the nutrient cycle. By journaling, singing, and tasting, students will learn about the relationship between soil and food.

**Time Required:** 1 hour

**Grade Levels:** 2-3

## Materials

Garden Refrigerator  
Recipe ingredients  
(see p.3)  
Photos or drawings to  
complete Deconstructing  
a Cheeseburger Activity  
(see p. 2)  
Garden journals or paper  
Pens/pencils  
Display board  
Plates  
Napkins  
Cutting boards  
Bowl  
Knives  
2 quart-sized Mason jars  
or similar sized plastic  
containers with lids

## MN Standards Addressed

### Students will:

Be able to describe the connection between healthy soil and healthy food.

*Science 4.3.1.1*

Understand that people need food to grow.

*Health Education 1.1*

Understand the difference between plant and animal food sources.

*Science 4.1.1.1*

Sing about the decomposition process.

*Arts 1.2.3.2*

**Creating a Healthier Minneapolis**  
**healthy eating + physical activity + smoke-free**  
**living**

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# Preparation

1. Familiarize yourself with “Dirt Made My Lunch,” a fun and educational song by “Solar” Steve Van Zandt of the Banana Slug String Band ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCeyXW64cns](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCeyXW64cns)). To watch youth gardeners from Troy Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin singing this song, go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrieCG8D2WI&feature=youtube\\_gdata](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrieCG8D2WI&feature=youtube_gdata).
2. Collect photos or drawings that illustrate how common cheeseburger ingredients can be traced back to the soil (e.g., bun, wheat, soil. See Deconstructing a Cheeseburger activity for full list of images needed).
3. Gather pens or pencils and make or purchase garden journals for the Lunch Makes Our Dirt activity. See Keeping a Garden Journal below.
4. Harvest or purchase – and wash – food for Kids’ Garden Refrigerator Pickles recipe .

## Procedure

**Song:** Dirt Made My Lunch. Sing along with “Dirt Made My Lunch” by “Solar” Steve Van Zandt of the Banana Slug String Band.

**Introduction:** Briefly discuss the importance of soil with a series of questions: Could we have plants without dirt? Could we have food without plants? Could we have food without dirt?

**Get Growing!** Do the lesson in the garden and have students scoop up a handful of dirt and examine it during this discussion. Leave questions open-ended as a set-up for using the Deconstructing a Cheeseburger activity to prove that “dirt made our lunch!”

### Deconstructing a Cheeseburger:

Students help prove how “dirt made our lunch.” Draw columns on a display board for several cheeseburger ingredients and place the appropriate image at the top of the column (bun, burger, cheese, pickle, tomato, and avocado). Then, taking one cheeseburger ingredient at a time, challenge the class to trace each ingredient back to the soil. Hand out images for students to post on the display board as you connect each ingredient to the soil. For example, the cheese pictures would include cheese, milk, cow, grass, and soil. For a pickle, use a picture of a pickle at the top of the column and then a bottle of vinegar, cucumber, a cucumber plant, a dill plant, and soil. Here’s an example of the chart:

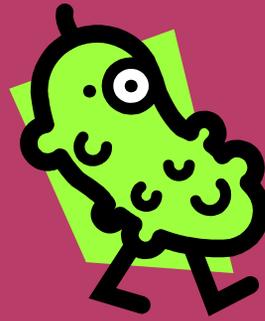
BUN	BURGER	CHEESE	PICKLE	TOMATO	AVACADO
Flour	Beef	Milk	Vinegar	Tomato	Avacado
Wheat	Cow	Cow	Cucumber	Plant	Tree
Soil	Grass	Grass	Plant	Soil	Soil
	Soil	Soil	Dill Plant		



## Kids' Garden Refrigerator Pickles:

### Supplies:

- Two quart size jars with lids
- 1 cup dill (flowers, seeds, and stems all work)
- 5-6 medium cucumbers
- 4 pinches of mustard seed
- 6 black peppercorns
- ½ cup of vinegar
- 2 cups of water
- 8 teaspoons salt



Harvest, wash, and slice the cucumbers into wedges. Place them in a bowl with the dill and salt, and mix them by hand or with a mixing spoon. Using two mason jars, add to each 2 pinches of mustard seed, 3 peppercorns, ¼ cup of vinegar, and one cup of water. Add half of the dill/salt/cucumber mixture to each jar. Seal the lid and mix the pickles until you can't wait any longer to eat them (minimum 10 minutes). If you have leftovers, check with your local food safety specialist to see how long they keep.

### Lunch Makes Our Dirt:

Look for stages of decomposition in your garden and/ or compost pile. If you are doing this in a classroom and don't have a school compost pile, bring in some items in various stages of decomposition from your home compost pile. Use recycled clear plastic containers or paper plates to demonstrate several decomposition stages. Have students record their observation about the differences between the items. Discuss their observations using the following guide: What differences did you see between the items? What makes food moldy? Answer: What does the moldy food turn into after a long time? Answer: Soil!

### Get Growing!

If you have a bit more time, start Garden Journals.

Have students create compost in a bag and document the decomposition process in their journals: Put food scraps, dried leaves, small plant parts, etc. in a zip top bag, mist with water and watch the process of decomposition take place. Or ask them to document their pumpkins before, during, and after Halloween.

**Tasting:** Remember to have students wash or sanitize their hands. Make fresh pickles with cucumbers from your garden or local market following the Kids' Garden Refrigerator Pickles recipe below.

### Take Home Activity:

Give students another common food to deconstruct (e.g., peanut butter and jelly sandwich, spring roll, pizza, burrito, chips and salsa). Have them demonstrate how to do this activity for their parents/caregivers. Follow up the next day with a discussion about how to make healthy versions of foods like pizza. For example, make pizza with a whole-wheat crust, increase the amount of vegetables, and decrease the amount of meat. Or make burritos with less meat and cheese and more vegetables (e.g., zucchini, onions, garlic, shredded carrot, mashed sweet potato or butternut squash, lettuce, tomatoes, beans).

