



STONE FRUIT

What is It?

- Stone fruits are fruits that have a pit or “stone” in their center.
- Common types of stone fruit include cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums. Blackberries and raspberries also classify as stone fruit.
- Washington is the nation’s largest producer of sweet cherries—a broad classification that includes 20-30 different cherry varieties.
- Apricots originated in China, where they were first cultivated about 4,000 years ago.
- The fuzzy skin on peaches helps protect them from pests and retains moisture.
- Nectarines are just peaches without the fuzz. They’re the same species but in smooth-skinned form.
- Plums are one of the first fruits domesticated by humans, going back to the Neolithic period.
- Pluots and apriums are both hybrid fruit created by crossing plums and apricots. Pluots are mostly plum (60% plum and 40% apricot), while apriums are mostly apricot (75% apricot and 25% plum).



Rainier cherries, credit: WSDA

Grow It

- Stone fruit can be a great option for school gardens with plenty of space because they are relatively low maintenance compared to annual crops and many other fruit trees; however, they take several years before they yield much or any fruit.
- Some varieties of stone fruits are self-fertile, while others must be planted near at least one other plant of the same species so that the pollen from their flowers can mix, allowing fruit to develop. This process is called pollination.
- Space planting holes according to individual variety instructions, typically 15 to 25 feet apart. Dig holes that are wide enough for the entire root ball to fit comfortably without bending or bunching the roots and deep enough that roots will fit entirely underground and the trunk base will sit right at soil level.
- Fill soil around roots slowly, packing lightly as you go. Be sure the tree sits level with surrounding ground once planted. Soil mounded around the trunk base could cause rot or disease. After planting, water thoroughly to help soil settle around roots. Wait to apply any fertilizer for several days or weeks until soil has fully settled and been well watered

Make It

Be sure to follow local Food Safety rules and regulations. Learn more here: [Food Safety Rules and Regulations | Washington State Department of Health](#).

Recipe: Peach Salsa
Yield: 8 sample size servings

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup peaches, chopped (fresh or canned and drained) • 1 large tomato, chopped • 1 bell pepper, chopped (see Note) • 1/2 cup onion, chopped • 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped • 1 Tablespoon lime juice • 1/4 teaspoon salt • 1/4 teaspoon black pepper 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Combine peaches, tomato, bell pepper, onion and cilantro in a large bowl. Add lime juice, salt, and black pepper. Stir gently to mix. 2. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Chef's Tips

- To add spiciness, , add cayenne pepper or diced jalapeno peppers.
- Serve with fresh vegetables, crackers, or [tortilla chips](#).
- Try with tacos, tostadas, fish, chicken, and more.
- Freeze extra lime juice for later use.

Recipe adapted from [Oregon Food Hero](#).

Explore interactive taste test resources to encourage participants to try what you made!
[Taste-Testing Event Resources](#)



Peach orchard in Grant County, credit: WSDA



Fruit Fractions

Learn It

Grades 3–4

Objectives

- Explore and develop an understanding of fractions as numbers
- Demonstrate that when a whole or set is partitioned into y equal parts, the fraction $1/y$ represents 1 part of the whole and/or fraction X/y represents X equal parts of the whole
- Taste fruits

Materials

- Washed fruit: 10 cherries to demonstrate parts of a set, 1-2 apples (or more, depending on class size) to demonstrate wholes, and a set of cherries for each group of 4-5 students for practice. Include additional fruits as desired to provide variety.
- Knife
- Plates for fruit
- Cutting board
- White board or chart paper and marker
- Math journals and pencil

Directions

Have students wash their hands with soap and water. Invite students to sit in a circle on the floor. Have all supplies at the learning circle.

Ask: What food group are these cherries and apples from? Answer: fruit. Ask: What are the other food groups? Answer: vegetables, protein, grains, dairy.

Explain: Today we're going to eat fractions. We are going to cut these fruits into pieces and taste them to learn about fractions. Show the students the whole fruits.

Ask: What is a fraction? Answer: A fraction can be part of a whole, like part of the apple. A fraction can also be part of a set, like part of the bunch of grapes, part of the group of cherries, or beads on a necklace. Write on the board: Fractions: part of a whole or part of a set.





Fruit Fractions

Learn It

Directions

The apples demonstrate a whole, while the cherries demonstrate a set. Begin by ensuring students understand the apple is the WHOLE and the cherries are the SET. Write on the board: apple=1. Tell students: This red apple is one WHOLE red apple. Cut the red apple in half. Ask: How many pieces are there now? Answer: 2

Explain and write: Two halves equal one whole or $2/2 = 1$. Ask: If I eat one piece of apple (put it behind your back), what fraction do we have left? Answer: $1/2$. You have one of two pieces, pointing to the parts of the fraction $1/2$ that you have just written. Explain that the bottom number (denominator) tells the number of pieces that the apple (the whole) has been cut into and the top number (numerator) tells them the number of parts of the whole.

Write: numerator/denominator. Bring the other half of the apple back. Show that now you have two pieces again. Each piece is $1/2$. Two halves equal one whole.

Write: $1/2 + 1/2 = 2/2$ or 1 whole. Cut the halves of the apple in half to show quarters, then cut the quarters in half to show eighths, repeating the demonstration. Once students grasp the conversion of wholes to fractions, practice adding and subtracting pieces of the apple and determining the correct numerator and denominator.

Optional: repeat cutting second apple into eighths and check for comprehension.

Next use the cherries to demonstrate parts of a SET. Say: The cherries are part of a set. Count how many cherries there are. Answer: 10 or however many you have. Begin by reviewing that one cherry is $1/10$ and two cherries is $2/10$. Pass out different numbers of cherries to volunteers to review the fraction of cherries remaining.

Next, give each group of 4-5 students a set of cherries. Write a fraction on the board and have students practice manipulating their cherries to match the fraction. Repeat with a new fraction. Have students write the fraction in their math notebook and draw the entire set of cherries, shading in the appropriate number to represent the fraction. Move around the room to assess comprehension and continue practicing with new fractions until students have grasped the concept.

Lesson adapted from [Lesson This!](#), and Montana Harvest of the Month Classroom Bites: Cherries [Harvest of the Month - Classroom Bites for Cherries](#).



Eat It

Stone fruits are packed vitamins A and C and a variety of antioxidants. These nutrients work together to support the body's digestive and immune systems. The fiber in stone fruits helps regulate blood sugar while supporting heart and digestive system health. Stone fruits are also generally rich in potassium, an electrolyte that helps build muscles and maintain a healthy heart.

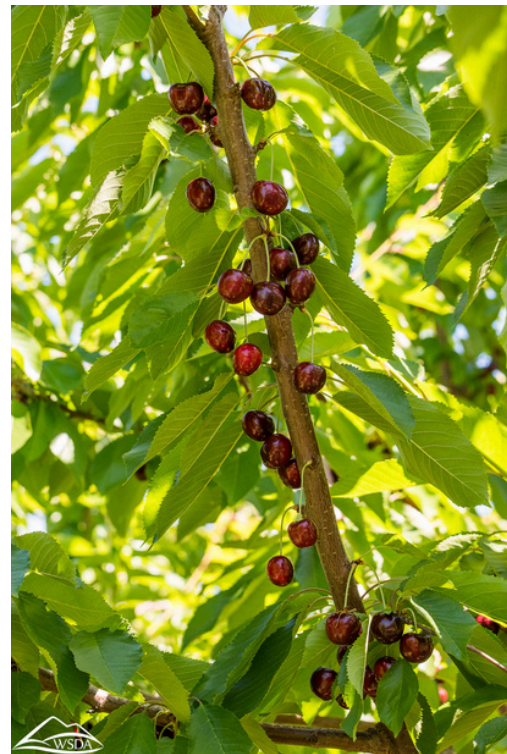
Stone fruit nutrition also varies depending on whether they're eaten fresh, canned, or dried. For example, canned peaches may have less fiber than fresh peaches because their skins have been removed. Dried apricots offer more fiber than fresh apricots per gram, because some nutrients become concentrated when they are dried. If choosing canned or dried stone fruit, choose options with no-sugar added.

Read It

- The Peach Pit Parade, by Shana Keller
- Pie in the Sky, by Lois Ehlert
- Baba's Peach Tree, by Marie Tang
- How to Make a Cherry Pie and See the USA, by Marjorie Priceman

More About It

- Curriculum for Children and Adults by USDA Team Nutrition: [Grow It, Try It, Like It!](#)
- Lessons from Washington Agriculture in the Classroom:
 - K–2nd grade: [Freshest Fruits](#)
 - 3rd–5th grade: [Peaches: What's All the Fuzz About?](#)
 - 3rd–5th grade: [Tree-mendous Fruits](#)



Cherries on branch, credit: WSDA