



# HOW TO GROW HEALTHY STUDENTS

*Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ Child Nutrition Director Guide







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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### PURPOSE

Michigan has a rich specialty crop history and is one of the largest growers of produce in the United States. *Michigan Harvest of the Month*<sup>™</sup> makes a great addition to established nutrition education programs. It introduces students to Michigan grown produce in a fun and effective way. Harvest of the Month has been used successfully in California for many years. The overall goal is to provide knowledge- and skill-based strategies that are:

- Standardized
- Replicable
- Cost-effective
- Convenient

These strategies are designed to motivate and empower students to increase consumption and enjoyment of a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables and to engage them in physical activity every day. Use this *How to Grow Healthy Students* booklet as a guide to the materials and implement a successful *Michigan Harvest of the Month*<sup>™</sup> program.

### DESCRIPTION

Studies show that healthy eating and daily physical activity have a profound impact on the body and mind by improving the ability to learn and comprehend, boosting energy, improving school attendance and changing attitudes, behavior and more. The materials and resources provided support healthy food choices through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as daily physical activity. It uniquely supports core curricular areas through exploration and study. The materials present opportunities to bring together classroom, cafeteria, home and community to promote common goals and healthier habits for students, especially those in low-resource schools.

The objective of *Michigan Harvest of the Month*<sup>™</sup> materials is for students to increase their:

- preference for selected produce items through classroom activities, such as taste testing, cooking in class as well as school garden activities, and through menu offerings in the school meals program.
- participation in physical activity and an understanding of why it is important.
- knowledge of and familiarity with Michigan grown fruits and vegetables and the rich agriculture of the state.



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW CONTINUED

Over the years, Michigan Harvest of the Month™ has had exciting results in schools and with families. Of the teachers surveyed:

- 78% said they would want to use the resources again.
- 70% found the materials easy to use.
- 74% reported that students were engaged when teaching or using the materials/activities.
- 75% said they would recommend Michigan Harvest of the Month™ to other teachers.
- 66% of the teachers agreed that using the materials improves acceptance and consumption of fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria and the classroom.
- 53% agreed that materials will increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables at home.

Of the families surveyed:

- Parents of school children reported eating more fruits than parents of school children without Michigan Harvest of the Month™.
- Parents also reported adding more fruits or vegetables to the meals they prepared.

Parents also reported their children were more likely to be doing the following behaviors:

- Eating more fruits
- Eating more vegetables
- Choosing fruits as snacks
- Asking them to buy more fruits at the grocery store
- Asking them to buy more vegetables at the grocery store
- Preparing new recipes with vegetables



## PRODUCE LIST AND CRITERIA

Choose from featured *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ grown fruits and vegetables during the school year.

Following the *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ featured produce by the designated season is highly recommended. This helps to ensure consistency with local, regional and statewide efforts to promote *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ with retailers, produce organizations, commodity boards and wholesalers. It also more effectively saturates the *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ message statewide, in the classroom, cafeteria, home and community.

A wooden-framed board titled "MICHIGAN HARVEST OF THE MONTH™ FEATURED PRODUCE SELECTION". The board lists various fruits and vegetables in three columns. The top section lists "CURRENTLY AVAILABLE" items, and the bottom section lists "COMING SOON!" items. The items are color-coded: red for apples, berries, grapes, strawberries, tomatoes, and winter squash; green for asparagus, cucumbers, cooked greens, corn, dry beans, green beans, melons, peaches, pears, peas, plums, spinach, and zucchini; orange for carrots, potatoes, and sweet potatoes; and purple for dried fruit and grapefruit. A small cluster of raspberries is shown in the bottom left corner of the board.

**MICHIGAN HARVEST OF THE MONTH™  
FEATURED PRODUCE SELECTION**

<b>APPLES</b>	<b>CORN</b>	<b>PEAS</b>
<b>ASPARAGUS</b>	<b>DRY BEANS</b>	<b>PLUMS</b>
<b>BERRIES</b>	<b>GRAPES</b>	<b>POTATOES</b>
<b>CABBAGE</b>	<b>GREEN BEANS</b>	<b>SPINACH</b>
<b>CARROTS</b>	<b>MELONS</b>	<b>STRAWBERRIES</b>
<b>CUCUMBERS</b>	<b>PEACHES</b>	<b>TOMATOES</b>
<b>COOKED GREENS</b>	<b>PEARS</b>	<b>WINTER SQUASH</b>

**COMING SOON!**

<b>BEETS</b>	<b>MANDARINS</b>	<b>SALAD GREENS</b>
<b>BROCCOLI</b>	<b>ORANGES</b>	<b>SWEET POTATOES</b>
<b>DRIED FRUIT</b>	<b>PEPPERS</b>	<b>ZUCCHINI</b>
<b>GRAPEFRUIT</b>	<b>ROOTS &amp; TUBERS</b>	

The featured produce were selected based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Michigan grown, if possible
- In season as close as possible to month featured
- Represent a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables
- Familiar to children
- Affordable
- Easy to use for classroom taste tests
- Recommended by school produce buyers for seasonal availability and cost

# IMPLEMENTING MICHIGAN HARVEST OF THE MONTH™

## GETTING STARTED

A successful *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* program is a team effort. The strength of *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* lies in its ability to reach students in a variety of settings – the classroom, cafeteria, home and community. The success of the program depends on the people who implement it and the staff who work directly with the students.

Key players in implementing *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* are the educators, classroom teachers and child nutrition staff. Others to include on the team could be school administrators and other school staff, students and parents. With a team in place, *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* can be used more effectively to motivate and empower students to increase consumption and enjoyment of a variety of fruits and vegetables and engage in physical activity every day.

## STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING MICHIGAN HARVEST OF THE MONTH™

There are a variety of ways to launch *Michigan Harvest of the Month™*. The following steps are to be used as a guide through the general process of planning and implementing a successful program.

### 1. Gather support within the school community

Meet with key players – teachers, child nutrition staff, administrators, school board members, school staff, students and parents to introduce *Michigan Harvest of the Month™*. Engage them and solicit ideas for planning and implementing the program in their school.

### 2. Coordinate with the Child Nutrition Staff

Meet with building cafeteria staff to discuss featuring *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* produce during the school year. For information on the featured produce, please refer to page 3 of this guide. Determine the logistics for classroom orders and delivery of the materials to the classroom along with the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program snack.

### 3. Order *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* resources

Determine the quantity of specific materials and resources needed for participating schools. These include the Teacher Resource Packets and cafeteria posters (see page 6-9 for a description of the materials). An order form is available that allows you to order your materials based on specific featured fruits and vegetables. These may be submitted to the Michigan Fitness Foundation via email at [resources@michiganfitness.org](mailto:resources@michiganfitness.org) or via fax to 517-347-8145. Expect delivery 2–3 weeks after placing an order.

### 4. Introduce teachers and other staff

Provide an orientation for all teachers and others who will use the materials. Share the Teacher Checklist with them to guide their use of *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* in their classroom.

### 5. Distribute *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* materials and resources

Provide materials to teachers and child nutrition staff. Additional training videos, instructions, etc. are available for viewing on our website at [www.michigannutritionnetwork.org/harvest-of-the-month](http://www.michigannutritionnetwork.org/harvest-of-the-month).

### 6. Provide ongoing support and solicit feedback

Present updates regularly at staff and parent meetings to continue the promotion of and support of *Michigan Harvest of the Month™*. Solicit feedback on successes and problems, as well as ideas for improvement.



# GAINING SUPPORT

## STRATEGIES TO INVOLVE SCHOOL STAFF

Include teachers, school nurses, librarians, physical education teachers and specialists, life skills and foods/nutrition staff as well as afterschool program staff.

- Discuss possible ways to promote *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ on the school campus (nurses' office, library, gymnasium, computer lab, etc.).
- Distribute the Teacher Resource Packet (see p. 7 for details) to all of the classroom teachers containing the materials and encourage them to adapt the lessons and activities for their purposes.
- Solicit ideas for involvement in staff development and in-service training opportunities.
- Invite school staff to participate by offering taste tests as part of their work with students.
- Discuss the challenges in promoting healthy food choices and physical activity.
- Invite them to implement other activities (e.g., if the school has a garden, discuss ways to engage students in garden-based nutrition education).

## STRATEGIES TO INVOLVE STUDENTS

- Schedule meetings with student leaders (e.g., student councils/governments, school health councils, student nutrition advisory committees) and other students to introduce them to *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™.
- Solicit ideas on how to best implement the program on school campus.
- Engage students in the opportunity to make a difference in their schools by expressing their ideas and having them work with the appropriate adult to implement them.
- Encourage students to involve their teachers and child nutrition staff to implement changes in the school environment, such as:
  - increasing availability of fruits and vegetables in the cafeterias (e.g., salad bar), vending machines and snack bars
  - starting or maintaining a school garden
  - improving access to school grounds and/or increasing opportunities for more physical activity

## STRATEGIES TO INVOLVE PARENTS

Parents are key in implementing a successful program because they make the food purchase decisions at home.

- Conduct parent workshop sessions at Back to School Nights and other parent meetings.
- Emphasize the link between nutrition, physical activity, improved academic performance and classroom behavior.
- Use the recipes in *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ to offer taste testings at events where families are present in the building to showcase the meals you serve to their children.
- Invite parents to share their experiences and skills in gardening or food preparation and their ideas for family physical activity. Parents can even share these experiences and ideas in the classroom.
- Invite parents to volunteer in the classroom on taste testing days.
- Provide them with the family newsletters. Encourage parents to share these with friends and neighbors.





## MATERIALS

*Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ is comprised of five key resources which can be complemented by a variety of other materials. Each component was developed using the Social Ecological Model as a framework and is intended for implementation in areas where nutrition education can make the biggest impact – classroom, cafeteria, home and the community.

*Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ materials are made available to distribute for teachers and for use in buildings cafeterias. Select the materials that will be needed in the fall and winter. Consider the quantity of materials needed in order to provide your school with the nutrition education resources that align with the fruits and vegetables being served in school meals or the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program snack.

Each fruit and vegetable featured is packaged as a unit for teachers for ease of distribution. Distribute the resources beforehand or along with the snack you are providing. Encourage teachers to maximize the message to their students by incorporating *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™ into their curriculum. Challenge students to find fruit and vegetable promotional materials and lunch items featuring each fruit and vegetable that is served in the cafeteria.

These materials are available by emailing or faxing the order form to the Michigan Fitness Foundation at [resources@michiganfitness.org](mailto:resources@michiganfitness.org) or fax to 517-347-7891.

## TEACHER RESOURCE PACKET

All of the materials needed for teachers will be included in an envelope labeled “We are featuring”. The Teacher Resource Packet contains the following five resources, intended for the teachers, students or the students’ caregivers. Distribute the Teacher Resource Packet to teachers each month while featuring the same fruit or vegetable with the FFVP snack or school meal.

### 1. Educator Newsletters

These newsletters have been aligned with the Common Core State Standards and include links to curricular areas such as mathematics, science, health, history-social science, English language arts and physical education. The Educator Newsletter provides key information about the featured produce, as well as resources to further explore each fruit and vegetable. It incorporates age-appropriate, hands-on activities, tools and ideas for open-ended exploration by students and sample physical activities that support developmental skills such as listening, reflexes and hand-eye coordination. Although designed mainly for use by educators in the classroom, the newsletter is a great tool to make available to child nutrition staff, librarians/media specialists, nurses and others who might aid in the successful implementation of *Michigan Harvest of the Month*™.



**Educator Newsletters**  
Target User: Educators  
Target Audience: Students, Pre-K–12  
Page Length: Four

The following are descriptions of the key newsletter sections:

- **Taste Testing:** Offers students the opportunity to experience the featured produce using their senses to help engage them in the learning process, and creates interest, awareness and support for increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables. Note: Educators should check district policy on storage and handling procedures. If food is not allowed in the classroom, assist teachers by allowing tastings to be conducted in the cafeteria.
- **Cooking in Class:** Introduces students to enjoyable ways to incorporate the featured produce into their diet with a food preparation activity. The recipes are an easy and student-friendly way to encourage more fruit and vegetable consumption at home.
- **Nutrition Information:** Provides scientifically accurate nutrition information and healthy benefits of the featured produce. This section explains how fruits and vegetables come in a rainbow of colors and the importance of eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day – red, yellow/orange, white, green and blue/purple. It also provides examples of fruits and vegetable within each color group.
- **Interesting Facts:** Highlights fun and novel facts about the featured produce to help keep students engaged.
- **Student Sleuths:** Provides learning opportunities for students to further explore facts about the featured produce and utilize research, data collecting and reporting skills. (Answers are provided in the Student Sleuth Answers included in the Teacher Resource Packet).
- **Botanical and Growing Information:** Presents scientific and botanical information on the featured fruit or vegetable.
- **History:** Offers a general overview and historical timeline of the featured produce. It includes the history, origin and migration into Michigan's agricultural industry.
- **Home Grown Facts:** Provides information on the growing region and commercial production of the featured produce in Michigan.
- **School Garden:** Features hands-on activities for students to connect to agriculture and science that can be carried out in the classroom or school garden.
- **Cafeteria Connections:** Offers strategies to utilize the cafeteria as a learning laboratory and to work with child nutrition staff.
- **Adventurous Activities:** Offers fun, hands-on activities for students to experience and explore featured produce through science, history, math, writing, field trips and monthly events.
- **Literature Links:** Suggests literature specific to the featured produce, agriculture and nutrition across all grade levels to complement the *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* activities.
- **Student Advocates:** Offers strategies for students to develop their leadership skills by educating others, including the media, about the featured produce and proactively involving the community in *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* activities. It links to the community through retail stores, farmers' markets and more.





## 2. Family Newsletters

The Family Newsletter takes *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* from school to the home, allowing students and their families to share the experience.

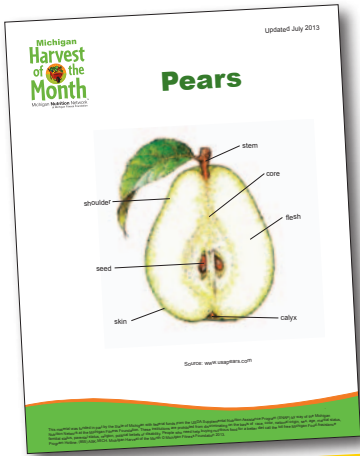
Each newsletter includes:

- General information on how nutrition affects and ways to encourage healthy food choices
- A recipe for the *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* featured fruit or vegetable
- Ideas for engaging in physical activity
- Tips for selecting, storing and serving the featured produce item



**Family Newsletters**

Target User: Educators  
 Target Audience: Caregivers  
 Page Length: One

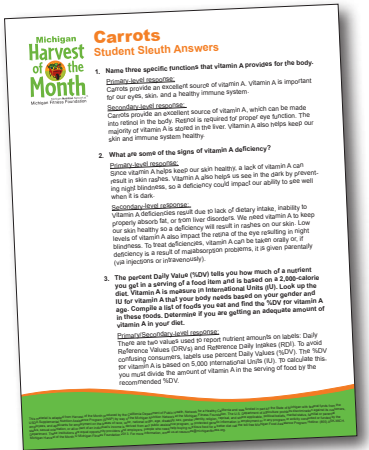


**Botanical Images**

Target User: Educators  
 Target Audience: Students, Pre-K–12

## 3. Botanical Images

Use the Botany Sheets to expand student discussion on the plant science of the *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* Featured Produce.

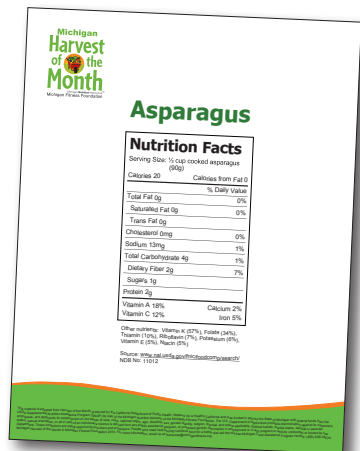


**Student Sleuth Answers**

Target User: Educators  
 Target Audience: Educators

## 4. Student Sleuth Answers

Student Sleuth Answers provide the answers to the Student Sleuth questions within the Educator Newsletters.



**Nutrition Facts Label**

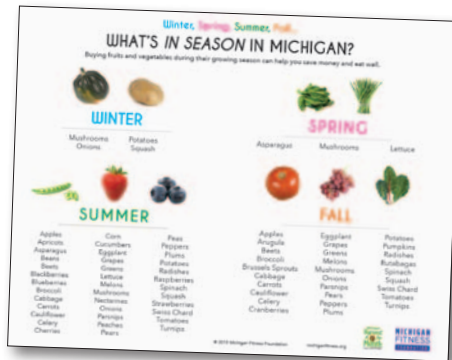
Target User: Educators  
 Target Audience: Students, 2–12

## 5. Nutrition Facts Label

For each *Michigan Harvest of the Month™* featured produce, a Nutrition Facts Label for the students is available that coincides with the Nutrition Facts Label on the Educator Newsletter.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE



### Mini-Posters

These 8 1/2 x 11" mini-posters introduces the families to the program. A brief list of health benefits of the color groups and examples of fruits and vegetables within each group is included. Educators should send this home at the beginning of the school year.

### Mini-Posters

Target User: Educators  
 Target Audience: Caregivers  
 Page Number: One

### Menu Slicks

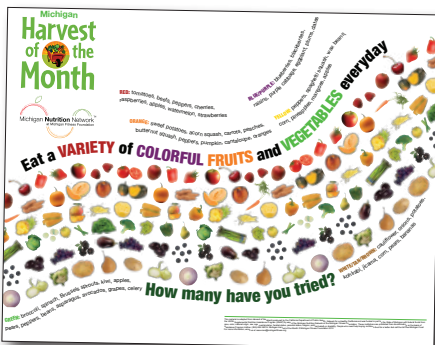
The two-sided menu slick is designed to provide child nutrition staff with a template for inserting the monthly school breakfast and/or lunch menu. Each menu slick is available on our website at [www.michigannutritionnetwork.org/harvest-of-the-month](http://www.michigannutritionnetwork.org/harvest-of-the-month) and includes:

- Activities with the featured produce that test memory and motor skills
- Activities that reinforce what students learn in the classroom
- Information on health benefits of the different color groups and examples of fruits and vegetables within each group
- Nutrition information for the featured produce
- Activities that encourage students to look over the menu and eat the school meals



### Menu Slicks

Target User: Child Nutrition Staff  
 Target Audience: Students K–5, and their caregivers  
 Page Number: One, Front and Back



### Cafeteria Posters

Posters will provide a visual display of nutrition messages and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Additional selections of posters for cafeterias will be made available throughout the school year.

### Cafeteria Posters

Target User: Child Nutrition Staff  
 Target Audience: Students, Pre-K–12





## EVALUATION

Evaluation of the *Michigan Harvest of the Month*<sup>™</sup> is imperative to inform and justify our investment in the program. The objective of the Michigan Fitness Foundation is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among students and their families. In order to determine our projects effectiveness, evaluation is critical. More details around the *Michigan Harvest of the Month*<sup>™</sup> evaluation will be provided throughout the school year.

## RESOURCES

Additional resources are available to complement the materials. Below are some examples of the resources used in the development of *Michigan Harvest of the Month*<sup>™</sup> and others that are readily available.

### AGRICULTURE

Michigan Vegetable Growers Council [www.michiganvegetablecouncil.org](http://www.michiganvegetablecouncil.org)

Michigan Asparagus Growers [www.michiganasparagus.com](http://www.michiganasparagus.com)

Michigan Apple Growers [www.michiganapples.com](http://www.michiganapples.com)

Michigan Blueberry Growers [www.blueberries.com](http://www.blueberries.com)

Michigan Apple Committee [www.michiganapples.com](http://www.michiganapples.com)

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Michigan Department of Health Services [www.mi.gov/dhs](http://www.mi.gov/dhs)

United States Department of Agriculture [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

Michigan Agriculture [www.fsa.usda.gov/mi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi)

Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

USDA for Kids [www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index/html](http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index/html)

Team Nutrition [www.fns.usda.gov/tn](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn)

MyPlate [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Dietary Guidelines for Americans [www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm)

SNAP-Ed Connection <http://snap.nal.usda.gov>

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ffvp>

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program <http://efnep.anr.msu.edu>

Leopold Center – Fruit and Vegetable Origins [www.leopold.iastate.edu/resources/fruitveg/fruitveg.php](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/resources/fruitveg/fruitveg.php)

## ASSOCIATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

The Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

School Nutrition Association [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Kidnetic [www.kidnetic.com](http://www.kidnetic.com)

Verb Now [www.verbnow.com](http://www.verbnow.com)

PE Central [www.PEcentral.org](http://www.PEcentral.org)

RecConnect <http://www.michiganfitness.org/rec-connect>

## SCHOOL GARDENS

Kids Gardening [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com)

Life Lab [www.lifelab.org](http://www.lifelab.org)

Project Food, Land and People [www.foodlandandpeople.org](http://www.foodlandandpeople.org)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Michigan Fitness Foundation would like to thank the Network for a Healthy California for the creation of Harvest of the Month™ and allowing the program to be adapted for Michigan. The Michigan Fitness Foundation would also like to thank Michigan's commodity groups and growers for their collaboration on the project.



## CREDIT STATEMENT

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of  the  
**Month**

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