



## THE PLANTS WE (DO NOT) EAT

### INTRODUCTION

There are around 7 000 species of plants grown for consumption in the world, but only 30 are often used as food. What about your region? How many different plants can you find in a local market? And, from those plants, how many do your students consume at least once a month? And how many have they never tasted or even heard of?

In this Open Learning Scenario, the students will get to know a large number of edible plants that are not part of their diet. They will also promote the consumption of these non-conventional plants, thus contributing to diversify the community's diet.

### THE ISSUE

1. Watch the video “More knowledge, better food choices” with your students.
2. Ask your students if they think they eat a great diversity of food.
3. Promote a discussion among students about the different plants they eat on a regular basis (at least once a month). Ask one of the students to list all the plants referred to during the discussion.
4. With the help of the students, make a quick statistic of the number of different plants that are part of the students' meals.
5. Talk with your students about the importance of eating a great diversity of food, namely plants, both for their health and for the environment.
6. Challenge your students to develop a project where they are going to search (both online and onsite) for edible plants that they have never ate.

### INTO THE COMMUNITY

7. Help your students to research online for edible plants that can be found on their country/region but they have never eaten (as far as they know) or even heard of.

### AIMS

- To reflect on the plant diversity of human's diet
- To identify edible plant species that are not part of students' diet
- To discuss the importance of consuming a great diversity of food
- To draw attention of the community to edible plants that can be included in the diet

### SOCIETAL ACTORS

- Plant producer
- Researcher
- Canteen staff
- School community

### KEYWORDS

- Edible plants, food diversity, plant diversity

### AGE RANGE

- 10-12 years old
- 13-16 years old

### SUBJECTS

- Biology
- Citizenship / Civic Participation

8. To facilitate the selection of unknown edible plants, you can consider, for example, plants that are unknown to (or not eaten by) 80% of the class.
9. Plants found in this search should be listed in a computer document, together with a photograph of each plant.
10. Take your students to a local market.
11. Help your students to search in the market for plants that they have never eaten (as far as they know) or even heard of. They should photograph each plant (including the name) and leave it to the classroom to analyse the percentage of students who have never really tried / do not know each of the plants.
12. Back in the classroom, analyse with students the plants they found in the market and add to the document (see point 9) only the ones that are unknown to (or not eaten by) 80% of the class.

### THE CO-CREATION PROCESS

13. Help your students to identify a food producer who works with non-conventional plants for consumption and a scientist who investigates the biodiversity associated with food systems.
14. Organize an initiative with your students (in person or online) where they can talk to the producer and the researcher, and learn more about the importance of increasing the diversity of the plants we eat, as well as which non-conventional plants can more easily be included in our diet in regular basis.

### THE (SUGGESTED) SOLUTION

15. In order to promote the diversity of edible plants that are available in the region/country but are not being regularly consumed, challenge your students to develop an infographics with a selection of plants (for example, the ones that were highlighted in the previous initiative).
16. The infographics should include the name of the plant, a photograph, the benefits for human health and some suggestions on how should it be consumed.
17. Test the infographics with students' families and canteen staff, to find out if it needs to be changed or improved (for example, the canteen staff can give suggestions on how to consume the non-conventional plants).
18. After developing the final version of the infographics, upload a digital version in the school website and distribute a physical version among the market consumers.

### TOPICS

- **Citizenship / Civic Participation:** Sustainable development
- **Biology:** Carry out responsible citizenship interventions (feasible and substantiated) aimed at preventing/minimizing/remedy the problem under study and promote the use sustainable use of natural resources.

### SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCES

- Collaborating and connecting
- Critical thinking
- Developing creative solutions

### SET-UP

- Part of the activity is developed outside school, on a local market
- The rest of the activity can be developed in school context

### MATERIALS

- Camera or cell phone
- Form to list the plants from the market