



# Let's Make Pickles

## WHAT'S THE Big Idea? Cycles

### Materials

- *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey
- small jars with lids that have been washed/sanitized in the dishwasher
- ingredients for pickle making (see Recipe Card below)

### Enduring Understandings

- Fruits and vegetables are harvested fresh during the growing season.
- Fresh food can be preserved to prevent spoilage so that it can be eaten later.

### Objectives

- Children demonstrate the correct way to cut vegetables.
- Children show interest and curiosity where their food comes from.
- Children discover that cucumbers turn into pickles.

## Refrigerator Pickles

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 c. distilled white vinegar
- 1 tbsp. salt
- 1 c. white sugar
- 6 c. sliced cucumbers
- 1 c. sliced onions
- 1 c. sliced green bell peppers
- 1 c. celery seed (*optional*)
- ½ tsp. of dry mustard (*optional*)

### INSTRUCTIONS

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, bring vinegar, salt, and sugar to a boil. Boil until the sugar has dissolved, about 10 minutes. Place the cucumbers, onions, and green bell peppers in a large bowl. Pour the vinegar mixture over the vegetables, transfer to sterile containers, and store in the refrigerator.

### Directions

Prep the brine with or without your students depending on your kitchen availability. Cooked brine can be stored in a kid-sized pitcher so it is easy for them to pour into the jars.

1. Read *Blueberries for Sal* with your students. Discuss the story with the children; ask them

why Sal and her mother were picking blueberries. (To preserve them to eat over the winter, when fresh berries aren't available.)

2. Talk about gardening with students, and the time of year that vegetables and fruit are picked fresh. Ask children if this is the only time that they eat these things. Explain that we are able to enjoy fruits and vegetables all year long through preserving food. If you have experimented with composting (see "Incredible Compost," in *Who Are We?* p.59), talk about what happens to food scraps over time. Explain that preserving food prevents it from rotting and decomposing.
3. Ask the children if they'd like to preserve some food themselves. Show them the cucumbers and other ingredients, and ask if they know what these ingredients make.
4. Have children wash cucumbers. Using kid-safe cutting tools (such as ones you can purchase from [www.for-smallhands.com](http://www.for-smallhands.com)) to chop the cucumbers, peppers, and onions.

### Extensions

- Try other pickling recipes such as Dilly Beans (see recipe card on facing page).
- Taste test a variety of pickles such as dill, sweet, bread and butter, and gherkins. Graph children's preferences.

5. Fill the jars with cucumbers, leaving enough clearance on top to cover them with brine. Pour the brine over the cucumbers, and put the top on the jar. Store the pickles in the refrigerator, they will be ready to eat in 3–4 days and will keep for a month.
6. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

## Discussion Questions

- Where do pickles come from?
- How do you like to eat your pickles?
- Why do people make pickles?
- What other foods do people preserve?
- What foods are fresh in spring? Summer? Fall? Winter?



## Dilly Beans

*Adapted from a recipe in EDIBLE SEATTLE*

### INGREDIENTS

2–3 c. green beans, trimmed  
 onion, thinly sliced  
 fresh dill sprigs (2 per jar)  
 black peppercorns (½ tsp. per jar)  
 red pepper flakes ( ⅛ tsp. per jar)  
 whole clove garlic, slightly  
 crushed (1–2 per jar)

*For the brine, which makes enough  
 for a couple of pint jars or one quart jar:*

¾ c. white vinegar  
 ¾ c. water  
 2 tsp. sugar  
 1 tsp. kosher salt

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Blanch the beans: submerge them in boiling water for about 30 seconds, then transfer them to an ice-water bath until cooled.
2. Pack the green beans, onion, and dill vertically into clean canning jars. Add the peppercorns, red pepper flakes, and garlic.
3. In a saucepan, bring the vinegar, water, sugar and salt to a boil. Remove from heat and pour into the jars, leaving just a little headspace. Cover jars and cool to room temperature, then refrigerate. Beans will be ready to eat in 2–3 days and will keep for months in the refrigerator.