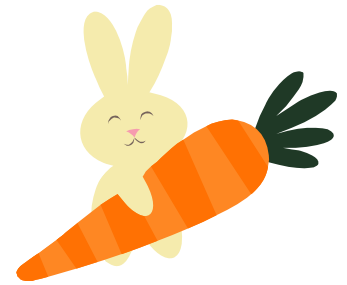# Tops and Bottoms

Grade Level: 2-4

Objective: After completing this activity, students will have a better understanding of how garden vegetables grow and what part of the vegetable they can eat.

Illinois Learning Standards: 1.A1a; 1.A1b; 2.B.1c; 4.A.1c; 11.B.1a; 11.B.1c; 12.A.1a; 12.A.1b; 12.B.1a

Assessment Framework: 1.3.01; 1.3.06; 1.3.07; 1.3.13; 2.3.02; 2.3.10; 12.4.03; 12.4.04; 12.4.05

Suggested Reading Materials:

Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens ISBN: 978-0152928513

Illinois AITC Specialty Crops Ag Mag

What You Will Need:

Vegetable template from www.agintheclassrom.org 2 Paper Fasteners (brads)

Colored pencils or crayons   Hole Punch   Scissors   Glue

Two white paper plates per student

About the Book:

Tops & Bottoms, adapted and illustrated by Janet Stevens, is a story which has its origins in slave stories from the American South. In this trickster tale, a clever hare outwits the lazy bear while planting and harvesting the tops and bottoms of their vegetable garden.

Key Words:

- **hare** - The American form of hare is generally called rabbit.

- **harvest** - The gathering of a crop season. A period in which agricultural work is done and a particular type of weather prevails.

Getting Started:

Before reading the book, ask students to think of vegetables they eat. List them on a chart. Emphasize that vegetables are plants grown for food. It may also be necessary to emphasize the difference between fruits and vegetables as the list is made.

As a group, look at the cover of the book. What vegetables are pictured? What animals are pictured? Note the Caldecott Honor book Award Medal. This award is given to books that have outstanding illustrations. Encourage students to look carefully at the illustrations as the story is read.

Activity Instructions:

1. Have students color and cut out the vegetables from the vegetable template.

2. Next have students fold one plate in half and draw a line down the center of the plate. Color one half of the plate blue and the other half brown.

3. Now have students glue the vegetables on the colored plate. The blue space will serve as the sky, so anything that grows on "top" should be placed on the line "growing" into the blue, anything that grows from the "bottom" should be placed on the line "growing" into the brown side of the plate. When finished, all the vegetables should be lined up on the center line (fold) with the "tops" vegetables showing in the blue and the "bottom" vegetables showing in the brown.

4. Next write on the second paper plate the words "Tops" and "Bottoms" in their corresponding place on the plate. Now fold the plate in half and cut along the fold.

5. On the left side of the first plate (the one containing the vegetables) place a hole punch about 3 cm in on the line.

6. Lastly, place the two halves labeled "Tops" and "Bottoms" on top of each other and place a hole 3 cm in on the left side. This hole should line up with the decorated plate. Line all the holes up and place a brad to secure the plates. Now the bottom plate should have a cover. When the "Tops" is pulled up it should reveal the crops that grow on top and the same with the "Bottoms."

Lesson Extenders!

1. **Chart:** make a chart-list of vegetables before reading Tops & Bottoms to discuss what vegetables were included in the story. Then recall from the story if it was the top or bottom of the vegetable plant.

2. **Story Dictation:** Complete a shared writing activity in which students suggest ideas and the teacher writes down a story based on one of the illustrations in the book.

3. **Letters to Bear and Hare's Families:** Write a letter to the Bear and Hare families. Perhaps students could give them hints on growing vegetables or inquire about how their garden is growing.

4. **Writing About Your Garden:** Students who have grown a garden might be encouraged to write about their experiences. Students who do not have gardens could write about what their plans would be if they could start a vegetable garden.
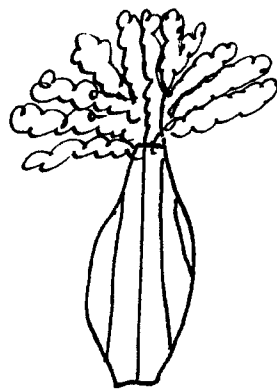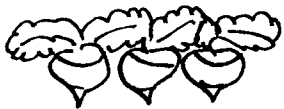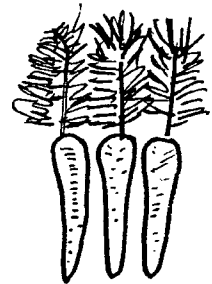
Tops and Bottoms
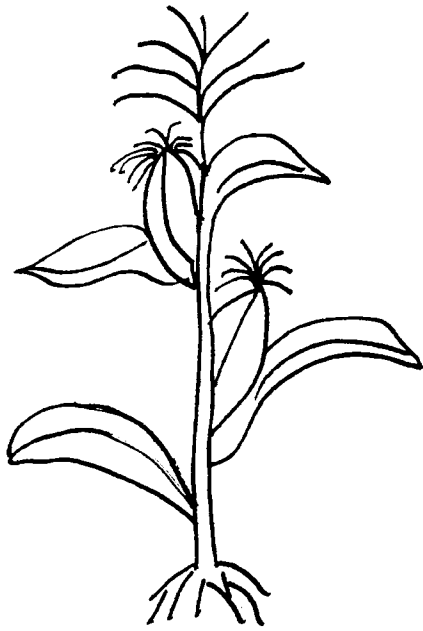
Corn

Beet

Lettuce

Celery

Carrot

Radish

Broccoli

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3