

A Common Core State Standards &
Next Generation Science Standards-Aligned
Discussion/Activity Guide for Grades K-3

WINTERGARDEN

“Glowing and warm, full of life.”
—Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review

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Written by Janet Fox
Illustrated by Jasu Hu
Published by Neal Porter Books

Growing and harvesting an herb garden can be fun and oh so satisfying—even in the dead of winter.

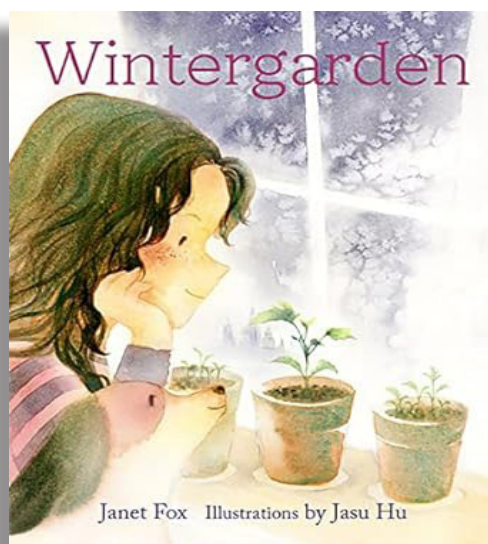
With a little bit of love and care, a few seeds nestled in pots, and a good windowsill, there’s no better time to make an herb garden with mom than in the dead of winter. Together, a young girl and her mother can grow everything you find in a spring herb garden, from oregano to parsley and baby greens, carefully tending their plants to watch them thrive, all while frigid snow falls just outside the window. The multiple harvests of fresh greens are just what they need to stay warm through the coldest and darkest season. When Spring finally arrives, there’s one thing on the girl’s mind: more seeds!

Guide created by
Debbie Gonzales, MFA



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Pre-reading Discussion

Observe the illustration on the cover of the book.

- Notice the girl and the dog in the illustration. What are they looking at? How are they feeling in the illustration? How do you know?
- Consider the patterns depicted on the windows. What do the shapes represent? Predict what the temperature might be outside. How do you know?
- Describe the plants growing in the pots on the window sill. List ways that they are similar and different.
- Illustrators tell stories with pictures. What is the story being told in the illustration on the cover of the book? Who is the girl? What is she interested in?
- Predict what WINTERGARDEN is going to be about.

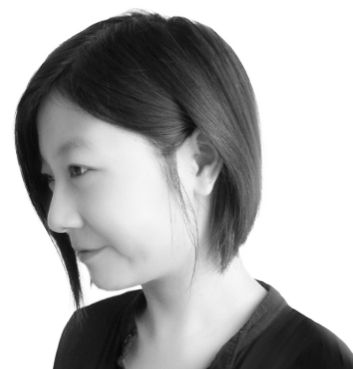
Meet the author - Janet Fox:

Janet Fox is the author of nine books for young readers. Her first book, GET ORGANIZED WITHOUT LOSING IT is a non-fiction self-help guide for middle graders. Her three young adult novels, FAITHFUL, FORGIVEN, and SIRENS are all historical mysteries set in the U.S. in the early part of the last century. THE CHARMED CHILDREN OF ROOKSKILL CASTLE and its companion THE ARTIFACT HUNTERS are both middle grade historical fantasies set in Scotland during World War 2. Her debut picture book, VOLCANO DREAMS: A STORY OF YELLOWSTONE, is non-fiction featuring the Yellowstone super volcano. , CARRY ME HOME is a contemporary middle grade novel about homelessness. WINTERGARDEN is her second picture book. Janet is a former teacher and has an MFA in writing for children from Vermont College of Fine Arts.



Meet the illustrator - Jasu Hu:

Jasu Hu was born in Hunan, China. She has worked as an illustrator in China for six years while studying Visual Communication at Tsinghua University (Beijing). After finishing her MFA in Illustration at MICA (USA), she moved to New York and started working as a freelance illustrator. She also illustrated ALL YOU NEED, by Howard Schwartz, which was called “A beautiful, poetic look at what one needs to live a good life.” by School Library Journal in a starred review.



Post-reading Discussion

***In the winter
when it snows
my mama grows
a garden.***

- Tell all that you know about the season of winter. What is the weather like during the season of winter?
 - Describe the scene depicted in this spread. Explain why the trees in the illustration have no leaves.
 - List everything you know about a garden. Where are gardens usually found? What types of plants grow in gardens?
 - Consider the image of the lady placing a pot in an open windowsill. Where is the garden being referenced in the text?
-

***She shows me what we've planted,
names on the paper packets.
She helps me sound them out.***

- The seeds planted by the girl and her mother will grow plants known as 'microgreens' known for their high nutritional value and positive health benefits. Explain why plants such as these are important to include as part of one's everyday diet.
 - Consider why Mama chose to grow microgreens instead of an ivy or some other indoor plant.
 - The word patience means restraint, calmness, and understanding. Tell why someone needs to have patience when waiting for seeds to grow...especially tiny seeds for microgreens.
-

***I wonder what the seeds are doing
deep inside their springy bed.***

- Tell all that you know about how a small seed turns into a plant.
- Closely observe the illustration of the root system. Describe the insects and details featured there.
- Notice that the root is established before the plant sprouts. Explain why a plant needs a root system before it can become a microgreen.
- A root system is described as being like a little underground city, busily collecting water and nutrients to help the plant grow. Identify features in the illustration that work together to gather what is needed for the plant to grow.

*The lettuce leaves crunch
like tiny icicles in my mouth.*

*The parsley dusts the potatoes
like green snowflakes.*

*The oregano makes the soup
taste like summer.*

- Writers use a technique known as figurative language to create imaginative pictures in a readers' mind. A simile is a type of figurative language used to explain and paint a picture with words by saying something is "like" something else or "as" something else. Consider the similes featured in the text above. Identify the comparisons made in the phrases.
- Have you ever felt the crunch of tiny icicles in your mouth? Is the experience similar to eating a piece of lettuce? Explain your answer.
- Make a connection between parsley dust and snowflakes. How are they the same? Tell how they are different.
- Consider how a spice might taste like the summer season. What does summertime taste like? How do you know?

*Winter outside the window,
garden on the sill.*

- A summary is a description of a main idea. While it is short, a summary tells the story of a larger tale. Consider how the phrase above serves as a summary for the events that take place in Wintergarden.
- What is needed to grow a garden outside?
- Are the plant's root systems the same in indoor and outdoor gardens? Explain your answer.
- Does growing a garden outside require the same amount of patience that an indoor garden does? Explain why or why not.
- Tell the story of a seed that grew to become a plant on a window sill in the winter.

A Wintertime Sensory Poem

*She plants the seeds,
teeny tiny
seeds like freckles,
seeds like eyelashes,
seeds like the wings of bees.*

Objective: To write a brief sensory poem using all five senses to describe the winter season.

Materials:

- WINTERGARDEN, the book
- The Sensory Poem Template (Guide, pg. 7)
- Pencil
- Markers

Procedure:

- Lead a discussion about the use of sensory words in poetry. Explain that using sensory words are like literary tools that help a reader get a clearer sense of understanding and connection with the message of the poem.
- Review Sensory Poem Template with the students. Explain that they will be creating metaphors describing sensory elements of wintertime. Similes as examples of figurative language that use comparison as description tools.
- Instruct students to use their imaginations to discover similes for each sensory element listed on the template.
- Have students illustrate their completed poem in the space provided.
- Encourage students to share their illustrations and poems with the class.

Example:

The wind tastes *like a fizzy cola.*

The wind smells *like flower petals.*

The wind looks *like angel hair.*

The wind sounds *like a drum roll.*

The wind feels *like rushing water.*

A Sensory Poem Template

Wintertime smells _____

Wintertime tastes _____

Wintertime sounds _____

Wintertime looks _____

Wintertime feels _____

Parts of Plant

*I wonder what the seeds are doing
deep inside their springy bed.*

Objective: To identify, associate, and describe the functionality of various parts of a plant.

Materials:

- WINTERGARDEN, the book
- Plant Description Cards (Guide, pg. 8)
- The Parts of a Plant Matching (Guide, pg. 9)
- The Parts of a Plant Matching Answers (Guide, pg. 10)
- Scissors
- Glue Stick
- Markers or colored pencils

Procedure:

- Use scissors to trim around the boards of the Plant Description Cards.
- Associate each Plant Description Cards with the correct space provided on the Parts of a Plant Matching guide.
- Use a glue stick to affix the Plant Description Cards in the correct space provided.
- Verify matches using the Parts of a Plant Matching Answers guide.
- Use markers or colored pencils to decorate the plant.
- Instruct students use their Parts of a Plant Matching project to as reference to write a short essay describing the functions of each part of the plant. Encourage them to write a story a seed's transformation into a plant.
- Have students to share their stories with the class.

Plant Description Cards

A **flower** is the colorful part of a plant that can make seeds and often smells nice.

A **leaf** is the flat, green part of a plant that catches sunlight to help the plant grow.

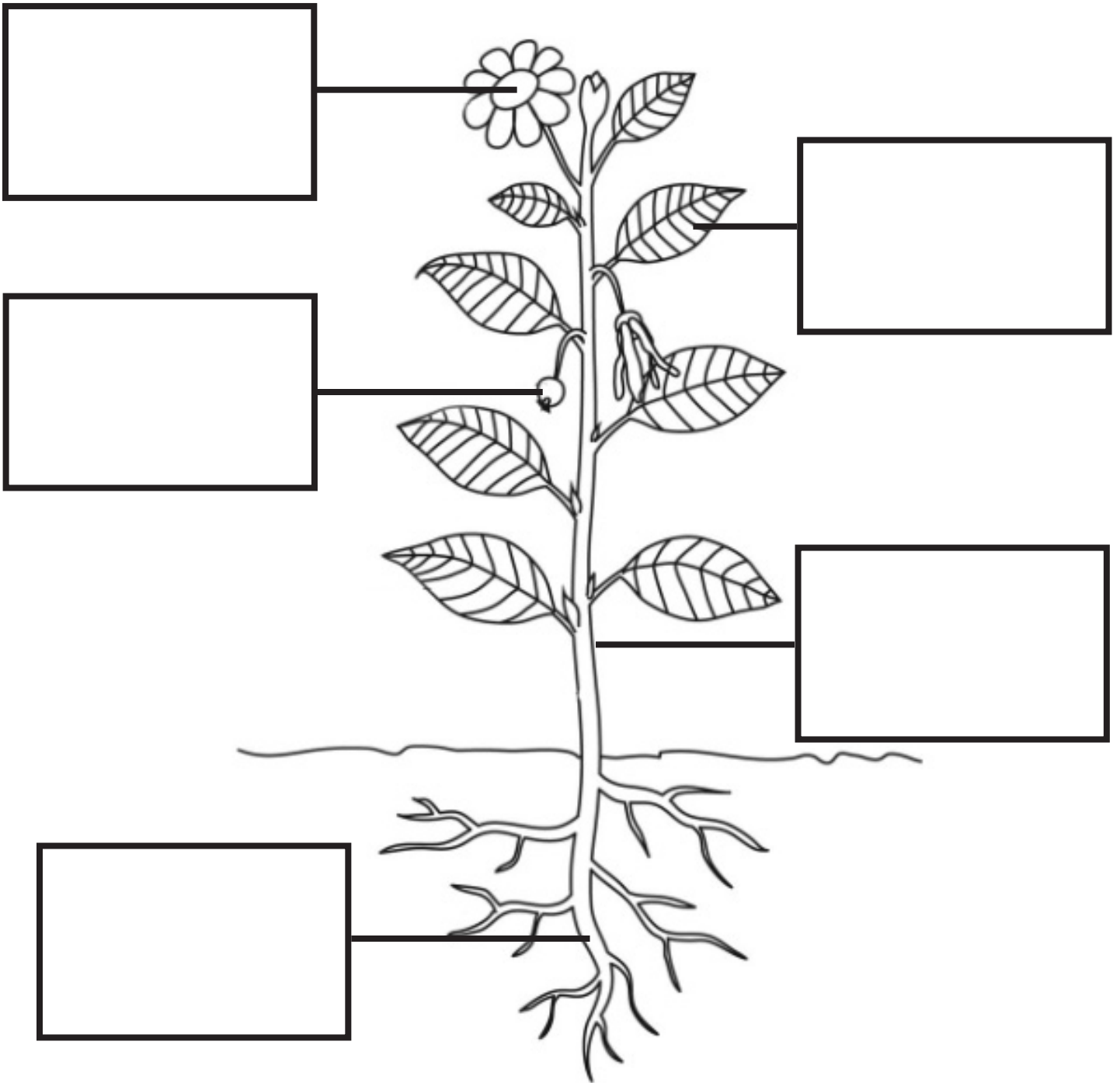
A **seed** is a tiny part of a plant that can grow into a new plant.

A **root** is the part of a plant that grows underground and gets water and food from the soil.

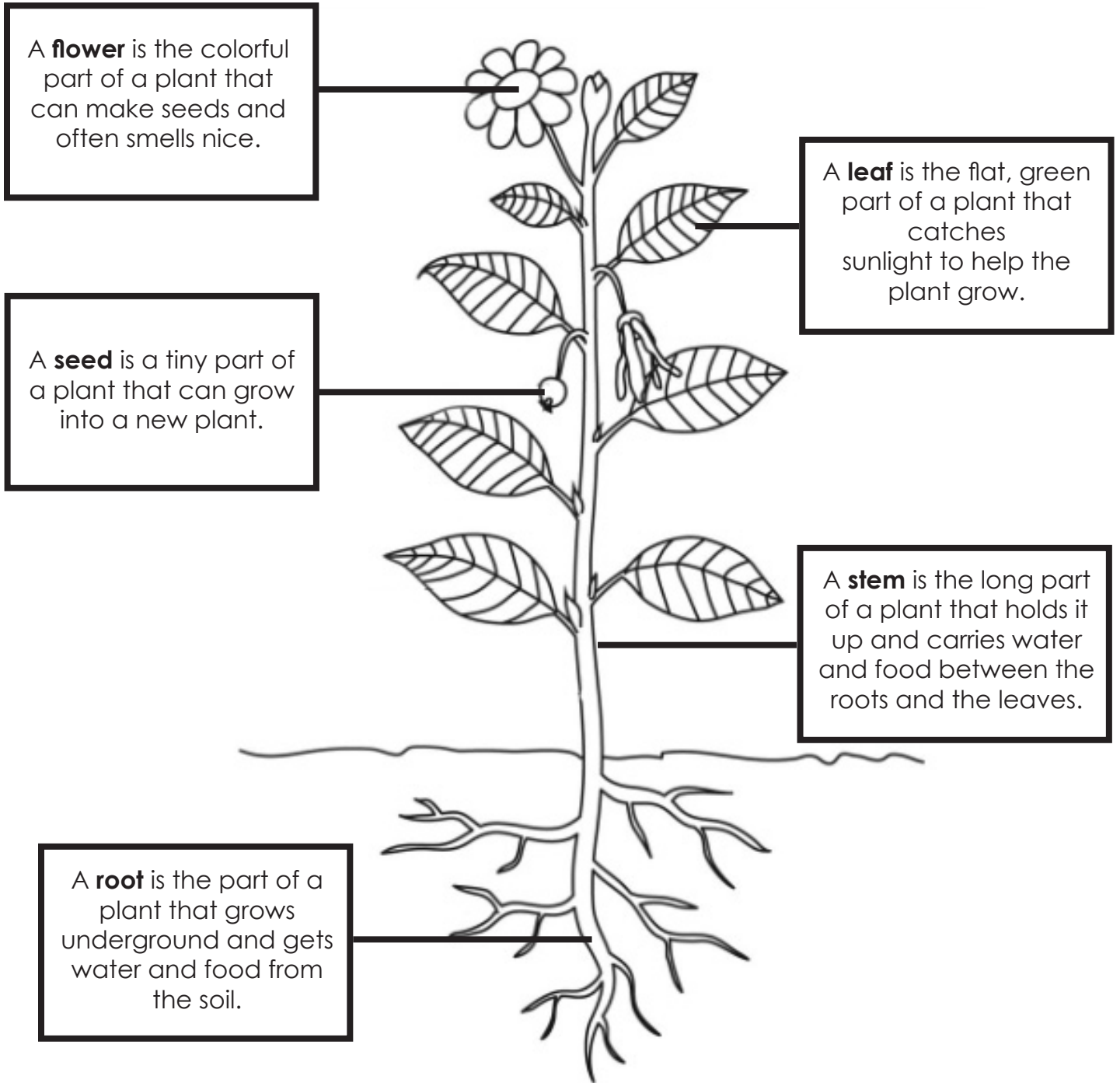
A **stem** is the long part of a plant that holds it up and carries water and food between the roots and the leaves.

Parts of Plant Matching

Match the definition cards in the correct spaces below.



Parts of Plant Matching Answers



Leaf Matching Puzzle Pieces

Baby greens?" I ask. "Smaller than me?" Mama laughs.

Objective: To engage in botanical analysis by associating specific plant structure and leaf formation.

Materials:

- WINTERGARDEN, the book
- Garden Plants (Guide, pgs. 12 - 13)
- Plant Puzzle Pieces (Guide, pgs. 14 - 15)
- Cardstock
- Computer paper
- Scissors
- Gluestick

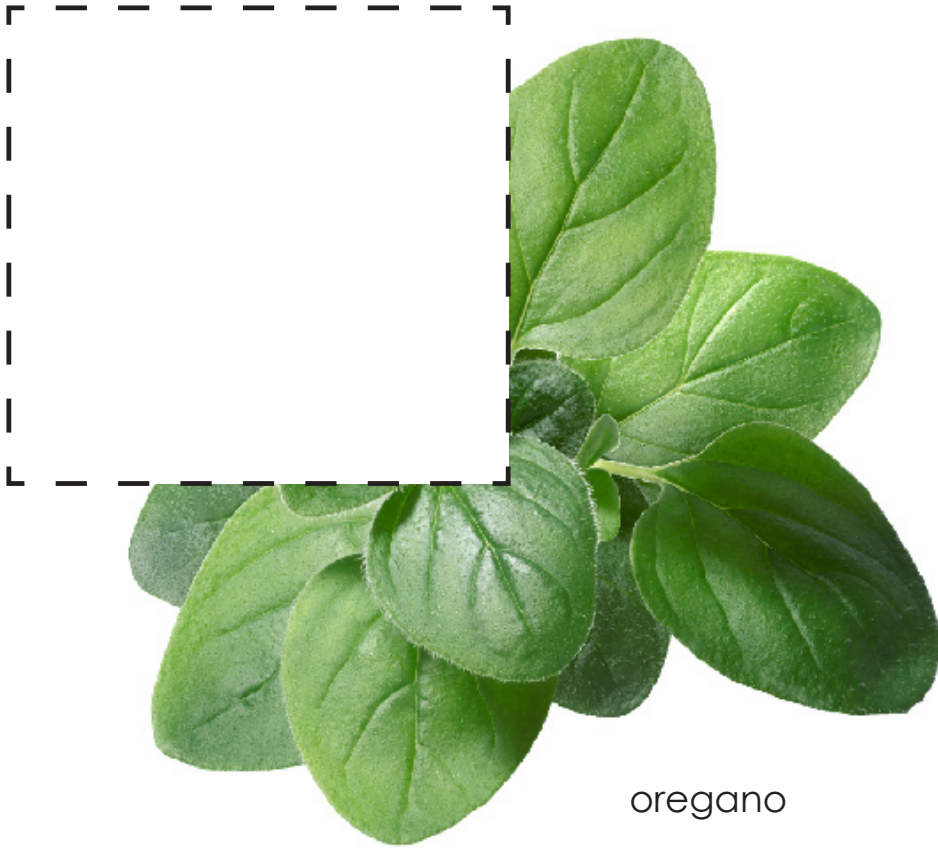
Procedure:

- Print the Garden Plants worksheet on cardstock.
- Print a copy of Plant Puzzle Pieces on computer paper.
- Use scissors to trim around the borders of each Plant Puzzle Piece.
- Associate each Plant Puzzle Piece with its matching plant structure.
- Affix each puzzle piece in its matching plant.
- Compare and contrast leaf shapes, leaf color, plant structure and form between the plants.
Encourage students to write a short essay identifying the similarities and differences between each plant.

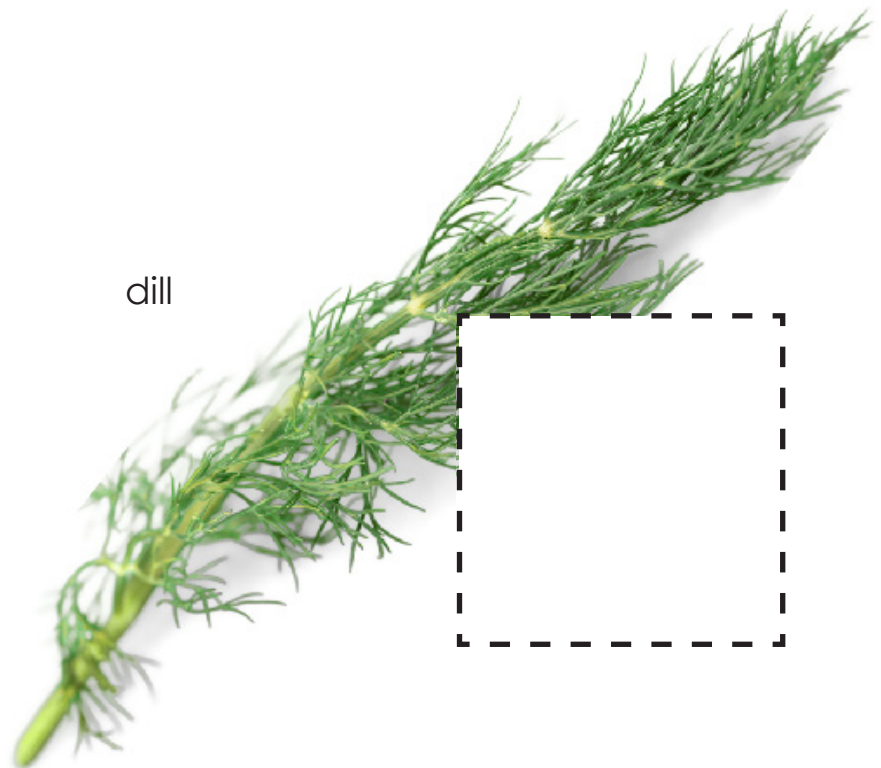
Wintergarden Plants



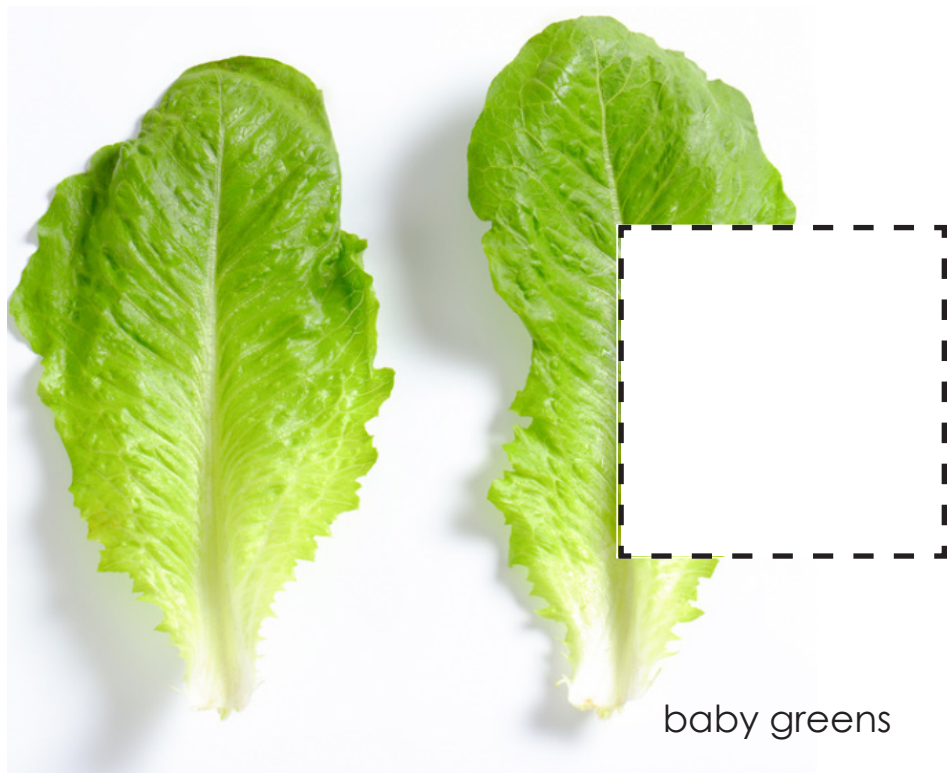
Wintergarden Plants



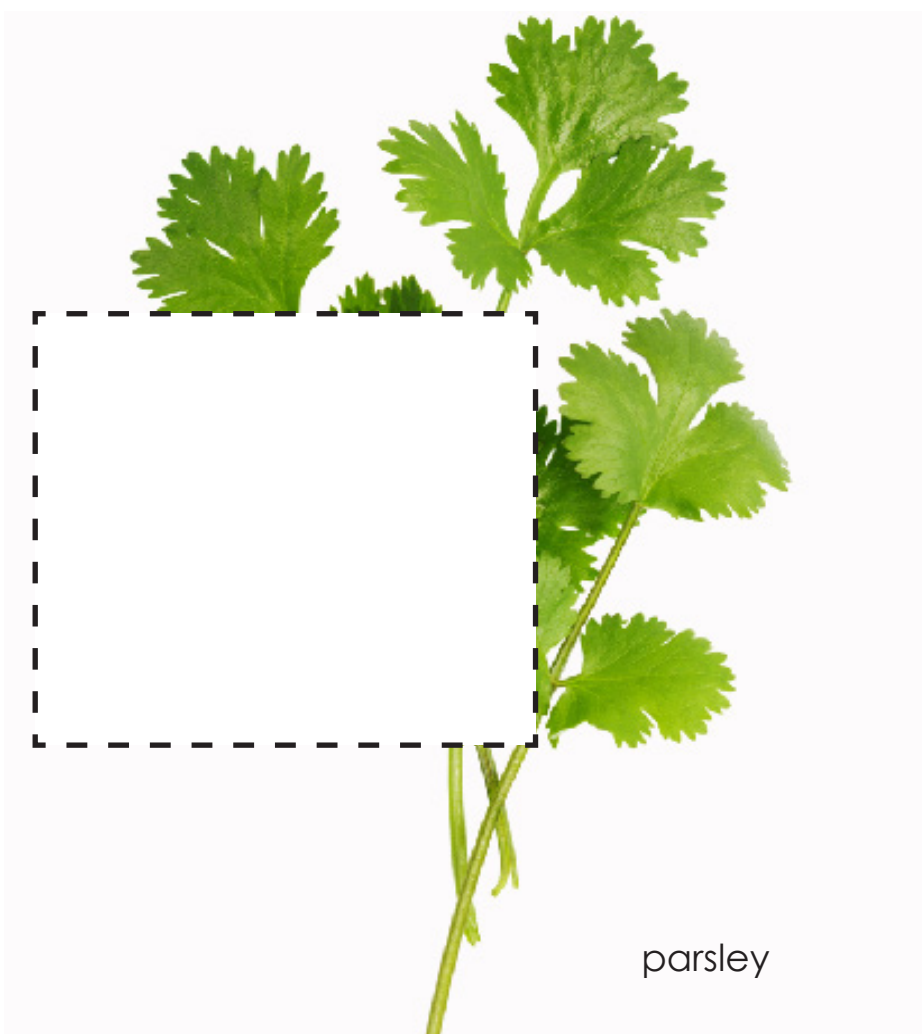
oregano



dill

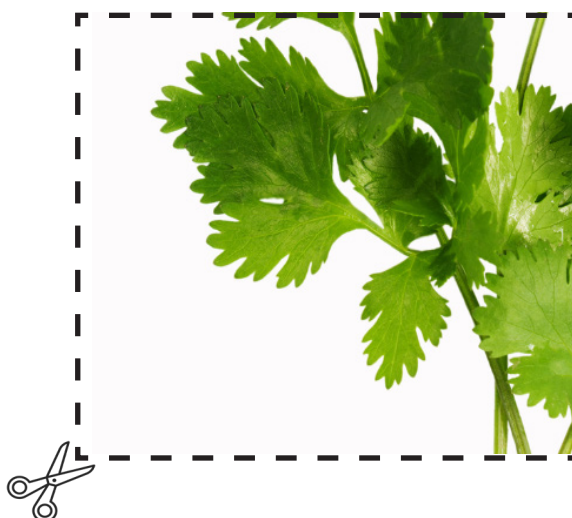
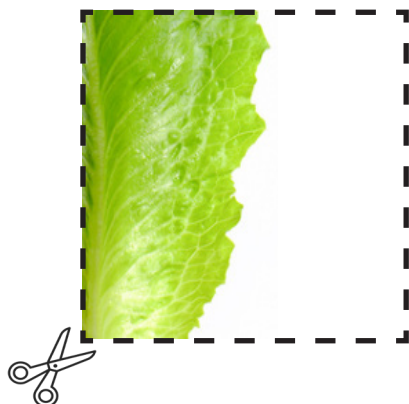


baby greens



parsley

Plant Puzzle Pieces



Common Core Anchor Standards Alignment:

ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy: RL.1, RL.2, RL.3, RL.4, RL.6, RL.7, RL.10

ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING:

- CCSS.ELA-Writing: W.3, W.4

ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING & LISTENING:

- CCSS.Speaking & Listening: SL.1, SL.2, SL.4, SL.5, SL.6

Next Generations Science Standards Alignment:

K-LS1-1 From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

- LS1.A: Structure and Function
- LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms
- LS1.D: Information Processing

