

What are kids missing from their daily eating plan? Studies indicate they are missing fruits and vegetables. Ask 10 young people how many fruits and vegetables they have eaten today; you will be amazed. Most youth like fruits because they are sweet but they are not fond of many vegetables. By not eating the recommended two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables, youth are getting inadequate intake of vitamin A, C, dietary fiber and eating more fats and saturated fats.

A team of five extension agents with the LSU AgCenter received an innovated grant to encourage youth and families to grow, harvest, and prepare home-grown vegetables. Nutrition agents in the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Jackson, Lincoln, Natchitoches and Webster taught a series of four lessons on how to plant, harvest, and cook four cold weather crops: broccoli, Swiss chard, carrots, and snow peas.

Mr. Tinsley's and Mrs. Wilson's fifth grade students at Alma J. Brown Elementary Magnet School were the recipients of the "Together We Grow" innovated grant in Lincoln Parish. Some of the learning experiences students were involved in, included identifying the growing plant, learning how to plant the seeds, best time of the year to plant the four cold weather crops, harvesting, and the nutrition benefits of the four vegetables.

Some of the students said they had never tried at least one or more of the four vegetables introduced. Cathy Judd, Area Nutrition Agent, prepared a dish featuring one of the cold weather vegetables. Students tasted the dish and evaluated the dish by color, smell, texture and taste. The most popular dish student ranked the best was Zesty Sugar Snap Peas and Cheesy Broccoli with Pasta. These dishes provide vitamins and minerals youth need to grow. Students also enjoyed copper pennies, and Swiss Chard with Purple Hull Peas and Fresh Tomatoes.

As results of the four series of lessons, more than half the students said they have increased their vegetable consumption. Students also received seeds to plant in their own garden. Students reported they have planted the seeds.

I want to challenge you to try their top ranked recipes. If you would like a copy of the other recipes, Cooper Pennies and/or Swiss Chard with Purple Hull Peas and Fresh Tomatoes, look on our parish website [www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com) and click on Lincoln Parish or call our office.

## **Cheesy Broccoli with Pasta**

### **Ingredients:**

1 ½ c. dry pasta, use whole wheat if available  
2 c. broccoli, washed and chopped  
8 oz. frozen corn  
2 T. butter  
3 T. flour, use whole wheat if available  
1 ½ c. low fat milk  
1 c. cheddar cheese, grated  
¼ t. salt  
Pepper to taste

1. Cook pasta according to directions on package, drain.
2. Cook broccoli in small amount of boiling water for 5-6 minutes.
3. Cook corn according to package instructions.
4. Combine pasta, corn, and broccoli.
5. Melt butter in small pan over medium heat until bubbly.
6. Add flour and stir until it becomes a smooth paste.
7. Add milk a little at a time stirring constantly until it thickens.
8. Add grated cheese, salt, and pepper, and stir well.
9. Pour sauce over pasta/vegetable mixture. Stir together and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

## **Zesty Sugar Snap Peas**

### **Ingredients:**

1 pound fresh sugar snap peas  
2 T. oil  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 t. salt  
Juice from one lemon  
Pepper to taste

1. Wash peas, remove strings, cut in half.
2. Heat oil in pan over medium low heat.
3. Add garlic and stir for a few seconds.
4. Add peas and sauté for 4 -5 minutes.

5. Add lemon juice, salt, and pepper
6. Sauté for 2 more minutes.
7. Serve warm or chilled.

Makes 4 servings

NOTE: Sugar snap peas can be eaten many different ways. They are great raw as a snack or in salads. They make an excellent addition to soups, stews, and stir fry dishes. Enjoy!