



A project of the Chicago Botanic Garden

BUDBURST FOR FAMILIES

Spending Time with Family and Plant Friends!

Title: Rooting for a Salad from Scraps

Age Group: PreK/K and 1st – 4th Grade

Purpose:

- **Why?** This activity places information and vocabulary about plants into the context of saving the plant parts we don't eat to make a memorable, fun new garden full of vegetables that will continue nourishing our bodies and minds.
- **How?** Many fresh vegetables that we eat at home have parts we can root to grow another plant.
- **What?** Before discarding into the compost bin, see what plant parts can be reused to plant a new crop of vegetables. Check out this fun family science activity to help start your garden.

Steps:

1. Take a look at what you have in your kitchen. Celery, green onions, heads of lettuce, and herbs? Make a salad! But don't throw anything out - these are all candidates to be re-rooted!
2. For celery and lettuce, as you are cutting the plant to eat, leave a few inches on the bottom of the plant. Place the small stem in a shallow container of water, bottom-down. Put it in a spot where it will get good light, and in a few days, your plant should start growing roots!
 - a. We like to use a clear container, to make it easier to observe root growth! Make sure to observe at your plant daily. Encourage your kids to draw pictures or write down their observations of what it looks like and what is changing.
 - b. For older children, incorporate math by measuring the roots daily as they grow. Does the plant grow the same amount every day?
 - c. Once the roots are an inch or two long and the plant is beginning to grow new stems/leaves, you can transplant to soil!
3. Green onions are even easier! You only need about an inch at the bottom, root in a small container, and once the green tops start growing again, you can snip them off a little at a time!
4. Herbs are similar! This time, instead of keeping the bottom, take a small cutting of the newer growth from the top of the plant. New growth will root more easily! Make sure your cutting is a few inches tall, and stick the bottom in a container of water