

Welcome to  
**Sysco Produce "School Times,"**  
where you will find some of the freshest news in the school food service and produce industries. In this monthly newsletter, we will look at "trends" in the produce and school food service industries, the most useful up-to-date news, recipes, helpful tips and fun facts about the produce you eat and serve.



## Feature of the Month

## YOU INSPIRE HEALTHY KIDS School Times NEWS update

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AFFECTS ACADEMICS

A Dutch study found that students involved in physical activity on a daily basis fare better in the classroom. The researchers noted that increases in blood and oxygen flow to the brain that accompanies exercise may play a role in improving classroom performance.

One researcher explained, "Our findings ex-

pressed that being more physically active is positively related to improved academic performance in children."

The team is still working on ways to better understand the connection between physical activity and academics.

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## KUMQUATS

### The Golden Orange

Kumquats resemble tiny oval-shaped oranges. The entire fruit is edible with a sweet skin and juicy, somewhat tart flesh. It's flavor is similar to that of the orange with hints of tangerine. Since the entire fruit can be eaten including the skin, raw kumquats are easy to add to salads or use as garnish. However, they are usually candied, pickled or used in preserves and marmalades. Kumquats are good sources of Potassium and vitamins A and C. The Kumquat is often crossed with other citrus fruits, such as the lime (Limequat), the lemon (Lemonquat), the orange (Orangequat), and the Mandarin orange (Calamondin).

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## STORAGE TIPS... And Other Fun Facts

**ARTICHOKEs:** Can be blistered because of cold temperatures this time of year. Store covered or enclosed to help minimize dehydration.

*By the way...* Artichokes are neither a fruit nor a vegetable. They are the flowering bud of the Mediterranean Thistle Plant.

**PEACHES:** Have come a long way to get here, all the way from Chile. Their shelf life will be a bit more limited, so use quickly. There are no natural oils on the fruit, so keep them enclosed so they don't shrivel.

*By the way...* The same great Peach varieties grown in the U.S. during the summer, are the same varieties grown in Chile.

**KIWIFRUIT:** Because they have no natural oils on the fruit, they will shrivel if left in the open air. Store them covered.

*By the way...* Kiwifruit is the most nutrient-dense fruit grown on earth. It's like a vitamin pill... with fuzz.

**BROCCOLI:** Will dehydrate if kept in line of direct airflow from the walk-in fan. Keep covered.

*By the way...* At the turn of the century, the USDA took a look at Broccoli, and determined that "...broccoli has no commercial importance." An Italian farmer named Andy D'Arrigo, with seed direct from Italy, was the first to commercially grow Broccoli in the U.S., and since, has proved the USDA's assessment to be wrong.

**JICAMA:** Could dehydrate quickly in the walk-in. Should be kept in a cool, dark place in your back room.

*By the way...* Jicama is nature's thirst quencher. It is grown in the southern desert of Mexico and requires 190 days of 100+ degree temperatures in order to grow and cure properly.

Features... (continued)

## TIPS & FACTS

When picking kumquats look for fruit that are firm without blemishes.

Refrigerate them in a plastic bag. They can be kept this way for up to a month.

They blend well with fish and are particularly good as an accompaniment to poultry, duck or lamb.

The word Kumquat comes from the Cantonese kin ku, meaning "golden orange".

It is grown in many parts of the world including California, Florida, the Mediterranean countries, Japan, China, Indochina, Indonesia, Israel, Peru and Brazil.

The Kumquat tastes best if it is gently rolled between the fingers before being eaten, as this releases the essential oils in the rind.



### DID YOU KNOW THAT:

There are four varieties of kumquats, two varieties being the most common: **Nagami** and **Meiwa**.

The **Nagami** is oval-shaped and the **Meiwa** is more rounded. Meiwa is considered to be the sweeter of the two, yet Nagami is most commonly grown as it is a more vigorous and hardy.

**Kumquats** used to be classified as a citrus up until 1915 when they were given their own Genus, *Fortunella*, named after horticulturist, Robert Fortune, who introduced the kumquat to Europe in 1846.

Before eating the entire **Kumquat**, consider saving the seeds, as they are a source of natural pectin.

The **Kumquat's** arrival in America was in the late 1880's, though it was planted primarily for ornamental purposes until a rise in Asian populations created a market for the kumquat fruit.

The peel is rich in many essential oils, anti-oxidants, and fiber.

The **Kumquat** peel contains essential oils in it including limonene, pinene, bergamotene, caryophyllene, humulene, and muurolene. Together these compounds impart special citrus aroma to the fruit.



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### CANDIED KUMQUATS

#### Ingredients

- 4 cups of chopped kumquats
- 1 cup of water
- 2 cups of sugar

#### Directions:

1. With a paring knife roughly chop the kumquats.
2. Heat the water and sugar over high heat until comes to a boil. Simmer for 4 minutes. Add the kumquats and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Drain the kumquats through a sieve over a bowl. Return the syrup to the pan and simmer for 5 minutes to reduce. Combine kumquats and syrup together.
4. Serve or jar and refrigerate. Can be stored for up to two weeks.



## NEWS update (continued)

### FOOD ON SATURDAYS

A Missouri school district is working on a pilot program that would utilize federal funding to provide students with a hot meal on Saturdays. School officials are concerned that many students are going hungry and believe providing them with a meal on a non-traditional school day will be extremely beneficial for the community.

"It's a community need, and the school is partnering with the community to step up and meet the need," explained the superintendent. "We want to go as far as we can when it comes to food."

The program will start serving meals on Saturdays and officials hope it will expand to provide meals on Sundays and evenings during the week.

### CHICK-FIL-A KIDS MEALS

Chick-Fil-A has recently made significant changes to its kids meals, lowering the items' calories, fat and sodium. Options for kids will now include grilled chicken and beverages not containing high fructose syrup such as milk and water.

They will also be cutting back on the amount of Sodium in its char-grilled chicken, salad dressings and bread.

When asked about the changes, the vice president of Brand strategy said, "It's very crucial for fast food to be some of the people to take the first step. It's irresponsible not to do it."

### TEAM FIT

A Jewish community center in Florida has created a program to target obese children and their parents, offering them fitness and nutrition classes. The program "Team Fit" provides children 8-12 years old with group fitness classes such as Yoga, Pilates and circuit training.

Additionally, while the children participate in the classes, parents will be in an hour-long class on nutrition, discussing easy ways to plan healthy meals for their family. Then they will join their children in one of the fitness classes.

The program's directors are extremely excited and hope that working with younger children will help prevent the growing obesity epidemic. They explained, "We thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if we could get the kids at a younger age and introduce them to physical fitness.' If we could get it obesity before it gets out of control, that would be wonderful."

### SMALLER ENTREE, MORE ROOM FOR VEGGIES

After numerous studies, researchers are finding that when children are given a smaller main course, they are more likely to consume the healthier side dishes served with the meal. If the child fills up on the entree, the fruits and vegetables served with it are a second thought and usually are left on the plate.

The studies provided children with different meals varying in sizes. When the original portion of was cut in half, children ate more than half of their healthy sides.

One researcher explained why this happens, "If you give the child an option for a large portion of an entrée food that they really like, they will eat that more and they'll fill up. They'll reach their satiety point and they'll just stop eating."



## Produce Puzzzler

Each month, there will be a fun and entertaining question about the produce you buy every day. It will test your Produce smarts. Do you really know about the produce you buy and serve, or sell?

**What produce item was the original pacifier for babies?**

ANSWER to last month's Produce Puzzzler:

### How many seeds are on a Strawberry?

*Dr. Victor Voth is known as "Mr. Strawberry" around the world. Dr. Voth spent over 40 years tinkering around the chromosomes of Strawberries. He helped take the California strawberry industry from \$30 million a year in the 1970s to \$1.5 billion a year in 2010. Dr. Voth worked in Strawberry research through the UC Davis extension. Before he retired, you would find him in the research fields in Irvine, just off I-5. Asked once about how many seeds are on a Strawberry, without hesitation, Dr. Voth said, "Around 200."*





## Sysco Fresh Promotions **MARCH**

Each month, Sysco Produce will provide you with events that will be in the news, making these ideas very timely for your menu, promotions or specials development.

American Red Cross Month

First Day of Spring, March 20

National Agriculture Day

National Celery Month

National Nutrition Month

National Women's History Month

St. Patrick's Day, March 17

Poison Prevention Month

Irish-American Heritage Month

## The Sysco Produce Team

All of us at Sysco Produce are committed to one goal: **Your Success...** by making produce the very least of your worries! Here is a helpful list of important contacts. Please feel free to contact us with any question or concern. We believe that "a problem shared... is a problem already half solved."



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Ed Dossen  
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