

Each Month a Different Local Harvest

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For more than SEVEN YEARS City Schoolyard Garden (CSG) has been collaborating with Local Food Hub/4P Foods to source fresh fruits & vegetables from local farmers for our Harvest of the Month initiative (HoM). Over the years, Charlottesville students have tasted everything from kale and multi-colored carrots to spinach and cherry tomatoes.



In April, volunteers and Cultivate staff helped prepare 2200 taste test servings of strawberries for Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) students. After washing and bagging up the strawberries, they were distributed to each of the schools where they were packed into the school lunches for students to sample.

This year we have worked with the CCS nutrition department to shift how we serve taste tests to students in order to comply with COVID safety protocols. When in the past, volunteers have gone into schools to pass out taste tests in classrooms and cafeterias, for the last two years we have been individually packing the taste tests to go into students' lunches.

→ We are extremely grateful for the volunteers that make the taste tests happen and have much gratitude and appreciation for the CCS nutrition staff who have adjusted to pre-packing student meals each and every day. We look forward to continuing to shift and improve how we get seasonal, local fruits and vegetables to students through the Harvest of the Month program!

The strawberries in this month's taste test came from Lewis Nursery and Farms in Rocky Point, NC. Their farm has 35 acres of tunnel grown winter strawberries which allowed us to get enough strawberries even during such a chilly spring. The high tunnels help keep the growing temperature right around 70-75 degrees - the ideal strawberry growing temperature!

The strawberries in our school gardens are also starting to form! It's around this time of year that students run over to the strawberry beds to see if there is one ripe enough to pick.

In May, CCS students not only sampled spring peas, they also learned from their backpack flyers that peas are a good source of carbohydrates and protein. They are packed with many vitamins and minerals including: vitamins A, C, & K, folate, thiamine, manganese, and iron.

