

Too Many Tomatoes

Written by Eric Ode

Illustrated by Kent Culotta

Too Many Tomatoes is a rhyming, rhythmic garden story. The language is bouncy and silly and filled with fun. Here are a handful of activities to help you share this book in a classroom setting or at home.

A Garden of Garden Books

Combine this story with other garden books such as Ruth Krauss' classic *The Carrot Seed* and *Secrets of the Vegetable Garden*, written by Carron Brown, published by Kane Miller Books.

Counting

Use the illustrations as an opportunity for counting practice.

- How many tomatoes can we find on this page?
- How many bees?
- How many cars and trucks?

Language Prediction

As you read the story aloud, leave out end rhymes and encourage the children to predict the missing word.

Example: Down to the sidewalk, and down to the street,
drippy and slippery, juicy and _____.
Red ones and yellow ones, shiny and round,
jumbling, tumbling over the _____.

Tomato Parade

Conduct your own tomato parade, inviting the kids to march while the story is being read again or while chanting "One tomato, two tomato, three tomato, four! Five tomato, six tomato, seven tomato, more!"

Instruments and other parade ideas...

- Make tomato shakers from plastic Easter eggs filled with rice, lentils, or beans and covered in red paper maché. Glue a green felt tomato stem star to the end.
<http://www.thislittleproject.com/2009/05/how-to-make-homemade-maracas.html>
- Create paper plate tambourines decorated to look like tomatoes.
<http://www.busybeekidscrafts.com/Paper-Plate-Maraca.html>
- Make tomato-themed flags or pennants for the kids to carry while marching.
- Kids can make and wear tomato headbands. (See design next page.)

Planting Tomatoes

Plant tomato seeds using Styrofoam cups and potting soil for kids to take home and care for.



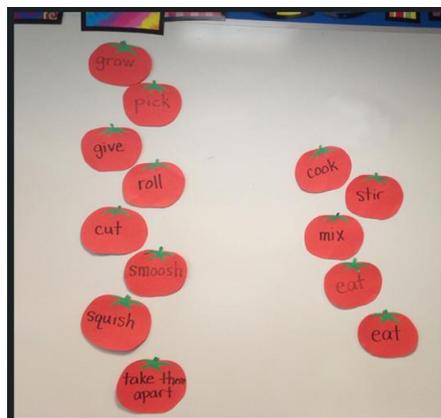
Tomatoes in a Basket

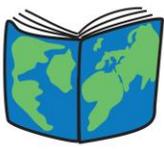
Have the story leader put out a basket and as many red balls (tomatoes) as they can round up. Give each child one. As the story leader reads the pages "one for the teacher...." have them come up one at a time and put their "tomato" in the basket.

After the reading, count the number of tomatoes. Depending on the children present, you could do some simple math. Ask one child to put 2 tomatoes in the basket, and another child to put in 2 more. Then count=4, take one out, then 3, etc.

Tomatoes, Tomatoes, Tomatoes!

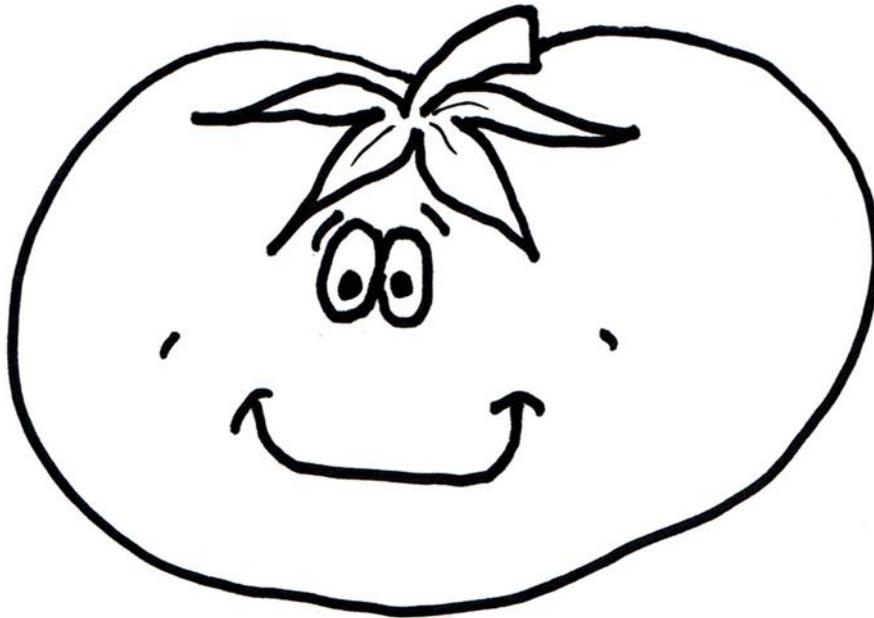
1. Before beginning gather a tomato, a red ball, and several paper tomatoes made from construction paper. (You can use the tomato headband pattern that follows to make these.)
2. Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Show a tomato to the children. Let them pass it around the circle while you ask, "Who has eaten a tomato? Who has grown a tomato? What color is the tomato? What shape? How does it feel?"
3. Set the tomato from the children and set it aside. Take a red ball and explain that you will roll it to a child in the circle who will roll it on to another and so. But that before rolling the ball on, the child with the ball will say, in one or two simple words, one thing they could do with a tomato. (Words such as *grow*, *smell*, *taste*, *roll*, *squish*, etc.) Each child should come up with a new suggestion.
4. Roll the ball to the first child and as each child in turn suggests an idea, write that suggestion on a construction paper tomato and give it to the child to hold.
5. After all children have contributed a suggestion, collect the construction paper tomatoes. Tape them to the front board. (See photo below.) Read together as children are able.
6. Discuss and play with the order/sequence of the actions. Ask the children to suggest changes in the order so that the sequence makes some sense; e.g. the tomato would need to be planted before it could be picked, perhaps sliced before cooked, etc.
7. After a sequence has been agree upon, invite the children to act out each step; e.g. planting, rolling, squishing, eating, etc.



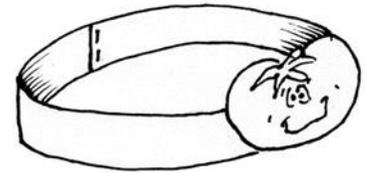


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Activities developed by author Eric Ode.



Tomato Parade Headbands



Have children color the tomatoes. Cut long, green strips of construction paper for headbands. Loop and staple to proper lengths. Glue or staple tomato to headband.

