

The Scoop on this Week's Snack!

A few pear essentials...

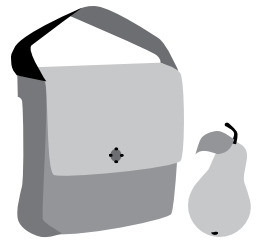
- Of the 5,000 pear varieties grown worldwide Bartlett pears are the most popular
- Bartlett pear trees can still produce fruit after 100 years
- Like apples, the pear is actually a member of the rose family. It is one of the oldest fruits known to man

One of the best things about eating pears - besides how great they taste, is that they come in different colours. From pale yellow to green, red to brown and lots of shades in between – the variety of a pear determines the skin colour. Bartlett Pears ripen from green to yellow.

**Sweet taste and aroma, juicy, buttery texture =
Ripe Bartlett Pear = Great Snack!**

A fall fruit, pear harvest begins in August and continues through October. Even when in season, pears in the store might be hard and green. That's because pears are one of the few fruits that do not ripen well on the tree. Whether grown in trees or on trellises, all are picked by hand while still hard. Once harvested, pears are packed and kept in cold storage to ripen. Have you ever eaten a pear that was brown inside with a gritty texture? That one was left to ripen on the tree for too long.

Since they are picked when ripe you may wonder, "How do I know if my pear is ripe?" The best way to test for ripeness is by feel. Pears ripen from the inside out, that's why you may take a bite and it seems fine, then you get close to the core and it's brown in the middle. Hold your pear and feel the flesh at the neck, or stem end. Does it yield to light pressure? Then it's ripe. If it feels firm your pear needs more time to ripen.



Lunch Bag Letdown

Have you ever opened your lunch bag to find your perfect pear all 'mushed' up and covered in bruises? Oops, your pear was ripe when it went in and ripe pears bruise easily. If your pear is hard and you want it to ripen faster, slip it into a paper bag with an apple or a banana. By the next day it will be ready for snacking.



From Farm to You

Let's think a moment about how we get our fresh food. Food is a necessity – something we need every day. While some people are able to grow their own food, or even have fruit trees or chickens in their backyards, most, especially those living in cities, need to purchase their fresh food and produce.



Where do you get fresh food in your community?

To market, to market to buy a fresh...

It's not always convenient to drive to a farm to pick up your veggies - a farmers' market brings the farm to you. At a farmers' market you can feel the seasons change by the produce the farmers are selling. Fall stands are bursting with colourful squashes and pumpkins and bushels are filled with ripe red, green and yellow apples and pears. At the market you can meet the farmers and learn about their crops, find out how old their pear trees are, and what kind of seeds they plant. A farmer will let you try different varieties of pears so you can pick your favourite to take home. You know where your food comes from when you buy it at a farmers' market.

How do you think buying food at a farmers' market helps the farmers?



Try this neat trick at home...Place an apple and a pear in a bucket of water. The pear will sink while the apple will bob at the top.



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BC Agriculture in the Classroom