

Veggie Art!

~Make something awesome from plants you've grown! ~



What's cool, funky, earth-friendly and shows off your creative talents? Veggie art! This year, we want to see veggie art displayed at the New York State Fair! It's a challenge, and we hope you rise to it!

Rather than offer elaborate "how-to's" that could stifle your imagination, we're going to simply provide you with some guidelines. We will be looking for:

- **Imaginative use of plants and plant materials.** How can you take advantage of the plant's shape and create something original from it?
- **Sculptural elements.** How might you manipulate a plant or group of plants into a living sculpture?
- **Neatness of assembly.** How does it hang together for the duration of the Fair without falling apart?
- **Number of plants used:** Are you making a display from one fantastic plant form, or using many to produce something unique?
- **Sturdiness:** How will you produce something to weather the 3-day time period? Consider plant materials that will best hold up through the evaluation period.



Photo credit: Jenny Eng, Mosspink.com, <http://www.mosspink.com/veggies.html>

OK, reality check here, please! How is this *not* simply foolishness? How does this activity connect with our over-arching statewide priorities for 4-H youth development, anyway?

- You must "grow your own" to experience this as a growing project first and foremost. No grocery purchased items, please!
- Think local, think sustainable, think reuse, recycle: some of those garden items that are not ideal for the table may be perfect for veggie art. Perhaps you have some russeted, pitted fruit (faces?) or some overgrown zucchini (a sailboat?). You get the idea! This is our golden opportunity to *celebrate* a tolerance of some imperfection and the joys of organic gardening.
- Creativity is the root of every science-based invention and innovation! So, get those synapses firing!

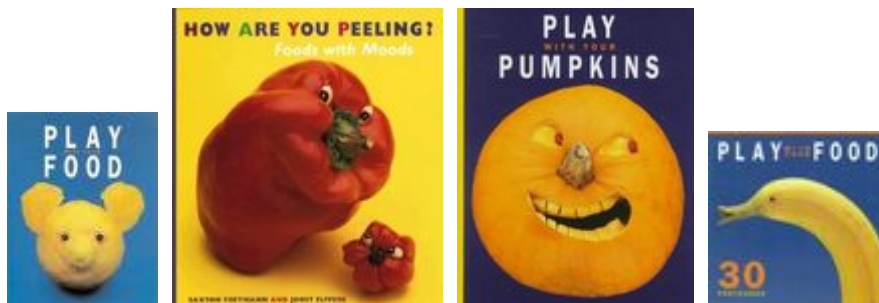
**How do we exhibit at the State Fair?
Simply exhibit in Class No. 19 under Horticulture.**



Photo credit: Joost Elfers, (see books below).

Going further:

- Watch for a veggie art workshop at this summer's day-long, hands-on living sculpture symposium, to be held on July 22, 2009!
- Find an enthusiastic and creative volunteer willing to lead a veggie art workshop. Although we want to see homegrown plants at the Fair, many grocery stores are willing to donate "tired" plant materials for a workshop. We held one in an after school setting, and Wegman's provided all that we worked with!
- Pick up a Joost Elfers book at the local library. We find his work to be an inspiration...



Questions? Contact Marcia Eames-Sheavly, ME14@cornell.edu