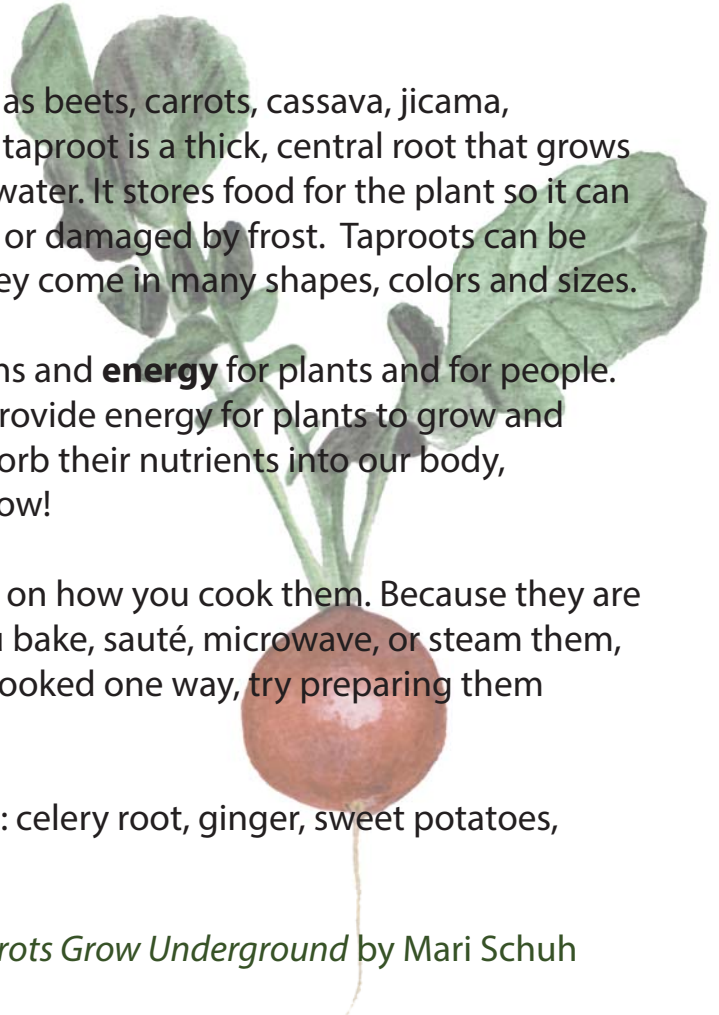


Root Vegetables

Teacher Talking Points

- **Root vegetables** are plant roots that we eat. The root is the part of a plant that takes "nourishment" (water and food) out of the ground to feed the plant and help it grow. It is like the plant's mouth!
- Plant roots have three major roles. They:
 - **anchor** the plant in the ground
 - **absorb** water and nutrients to feed the plant
 - **store** energy for the plant in the form of sugar
- Most roots grow **below the ground**. They search for water and nutrients available in the soil. A plant's stems and leaves need sunlight to create energy for the plant to grow and thrive. They grow above ground, where they can absorb sunlight and carbon dioxide.
- There are six types of root vegetables: Taproots, Tuberous Roots, Corms, Rhizomes, Tubers, and Bulbs.
- Many of the roots we eat are **taproots**, such as beets, carrots, cassava, jicama, parsnips, radishes, rutabagas, and turnips. A taproot is a thick, central root that grows directly down into the ground to search for water. It stores food for the plant so it can quickly grow new leaves that may get eaten or damaged by frost. Taproots can be straight like a carrot, or round like a beet. They come in many shapes, colors and sizes.
- Root vegetables are full of important vitamins and **energy** for plants and for people. Roots store carbohydrates and sugars that provide energy for plants to grow and thrive. When we eat root vegetables, we absorb their nutrients into our body, providing us with energy to run, play and grow!
- Root vegetables taste differently depending on how you cook them. Because they are rich in sugars, their flavor changes when you bake, sauté, microwave, or steam them, or eat them raw. So if you don't like carrots cooked one way, try preparing them another way!
- Some other examples of root vegetables are: celery root, ginger, sweet potatoes, onions, yucca, shallots, and turmeric.



Red Rabbit Recommended Reading: *Carrots Grow Underground* by Mari Schuh