

DRAWING FROM NATURE
Science and Art Lessons for Kids
Los Angeles Times Kids' Reading Room Page



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"Mary Mary quite contrary, how does your garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells and hands with yellow fingers all in a row."
WHAT???? Hands with yellow fingers???

Sure.. they are BANANAS! They taste good and supply us with vitamin C, potassium, and other vitamins and minerals. Monkeys and tropical birds like parrots and toucans eat them too. When they fall to the ground and get smooshy, everyone eats them from bugs to small animals.

The word "banana" is one of 500 names used for the seedless fruits that belong to the musaceae (banana) plant family and refers to the sweet forms with yellow skin. The word "plantain" is used to refer to the green or red skinned cooking bananas.

Did you know the [banana "tree"](#) is not really a tree at all since it doesn't have any wood fiber? It is a big herb whose "trunk" is made from the overlapping bases of its leaves. The fruit or fingers of a banana are actually berries with a thick outer skin and are formed in layers called hands made of 10-20 bananas each.

Bananas are used in many ways. The leaves themselves can be used as placemats, serving platters, or decorations. You can eat bananas by themselves or slice and add them to hot and cold cereal. They can be a part of chicken, fish, vegetable, or fruit dishes. Or used in homemade desserts, especially on a hot fudge sundae! What is YOUR favorite way of eating bananas?

** Illustration by Davita, age 11.*