

## Is *Vegetable varieties investigation* a good fit for your youth group?

**Vegetable varieties investigation** (Vvi) is a companion program to [Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners](#) (VVfG). Vvi is designed to engage youth participants in interviewing gardeners about their opinions on vegetable varieties, and submit their findings to the online library of vegetable variety data. Findings reported by Vvi youth participants are used by gardeners, plant breeders, and horticulture researchers.

### FAQs

#### Q: Who can participate?

Vvi is geared towards middle & high school-aged youth, although anyone can participate.

- Student environmental organizations
- Students seeking independent study options
- Advanced placement science students
- Youth/teens considering careers in science, community development, horticultural
- Special interest teen/youth groups
- Faith-based teen/youth groups
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Community service groups
- 4-H groups
- Scouts
- Any informal setting in which teenage youth gather with the guidance of an adult leader

#### Q: What is required to execute Vvi?

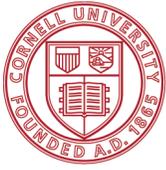
- ✓ An adult leader to coordinate the project
- ✓ The online Vvi toolkit
- ✓ Several hours of advance planning and 4-6 hours in active program execution
- ✓ Youth participants and a meeting place with computers which have Internet access
- ✓ Access to home or community gardeners

#### Q: What can I expect from the Vvi toolkit?

- ✓ comprehensive instructions
- ✓ templates and sample forms
- ✓ all materials needed to carry out program
- ✓ estimated time commitment
- ✓ contact information for support
- ✓ suggested resources and links

#### Q: Will Vvi help students meet learning standards?

See pdf Vvi Learning Standards and Assessment to find out how Vvi fits together with Research, Science learning, and Assessment Tools.



**Q: My group likes to have fun. Vvi seems like a lot of work. Will this feel like school?**

It's true that Vvi is about data collection and there is learning that takes place. You'll see through the hands-on learning Vvi experience that this does not equal boring.

**Q: My 4-H group meets during the summer. Will Vvi work for us?**

Absolutely. You will likely find that gardeners are most accessible during the summer months, especially through your local community gardens. Just be sure you begin planning as soon as possible, so you allow sufficient time for all the program stages (advance planning, orienting youth, field work, reporting data, follow up/evaluation).

**Q: Our students meet during the school year. Can we still do Vvi? Yes!**

✓ **FALL**

Early autumn through harvest is an ideal time to interview gardeners for three reasons. First, many gardens are overflowing with ripe produce, ready for harvest, and visiting the garden spurs students' own questions. Second, gardeners' opinions of what they have grown during the season are fresh on their minds. Third, some gardeners may be willing to arrange for students to taste test ripe varieties right from the garden. This allows students to deepen their understanding of the work they are doing.

✓ **SPRING**

Spring is also a good time to do Vvi, as gardeners are planning their gardens for the coming season, and reflecting on what varieties have performed well in the past. A sample spring Vvi program may begin planning in January/February, orient youth in March, and interview gardeners in April or May. Interviews at this time of year could take place in a newly planted garden.

✓ **WINTER**

If visiting a garden setting is not a priority for your group, Vvi can be executed any time of year, even in the middle of winter. The essential element of Vvi is interviewing gardeners. Gardeners are around all year, even when their gardens are dormant. If you choose to do a winter program, allow extra time to identify your gardeners, or make connections with local community gardeners the preceding autumn. You might also consider planning a field trip the following growing season, to visit your gardeners' gardens.

**Q: Our youth group meets monthly. Will Vvi work with our schedule?**

Yes. Vvi is especially designed to be flexible and easily modified to suit the needs of your group. When you are creating your time line and program agenda, be sure to make the appropriate adjustments, and build in extra time to review information learned in previous sessions.

**Q: Our group meets weekly. Will Vvi work for us?**

Yes. Vvi works very well with a weekly schedule. Be sure to design your Vvi time line accordingly.

**Q: We meet regularly, but with different students each week. Can we do Vvi?**

Vvi works best when students follow through from start to finish. Proper orientation prepares students for effective interviewing, and sharing data they collected themselves is a source of pride and essential for accurate reporting.