

THE CAT BURGLAR



BY STRIPES THE ECO-CAT

One day I was watching butterflies flitting from one flower to another looking for food and getting pollen stuck to the little hairs on their bodies. I wondered if they knew they were doing something very important in nature - pollinating the flowers and making honey for humans to eat?



I was deep in thought when I heard a little squeaky voice. "Hey Stripes, how's it going?"



I looked down and there was my tiny stripy friend, Felix the Field Mouse. Now you may wonder how a cat can be friends with a mouse. But you must remember I'm an eco-cat and I understand how important all animals are in nature. And anyway, he's stripy, just like me, so

what's not to like.

"Hallo Felix", I replied. I call him Felix as a joke, because it's really a name for a cat. "What's up?"

"Stripes, please will you be my buddy today"?

"I'm always your buddy. Why especially today?"

"Well", Felix said, looking a bit embarrassed, "I want to break into a safe and I need you to help me".

"Whoa, Felix, isn't breaking and entering a crime?" I wasn't sure that I wanted to be party to a felony.

"Please come with me Stripes and I'll show you."

So Felix led me into the fynbos, slipping past some Cape Reeds called Restios, past the pretty Ericas with their tube-like flowers, to a big Protea bush with hard leathery leaves.

"Look Stripes", he said as he pointed to a brown, cone-like thing on the plant. "That's what I'm talking about - the safe with all the seeds. The Protea stores its seeds in the safe so birds and insects and mice like me can't get to them. The safe will only pop open when

a fire comes, but I really can't wait for a fire - and anyway fires are much too dangerous for me to hang around."

"Why are you so keen to steal the seeds, Felix"?

"Why, silly cat, that's what mice eat. Those seeds are full of good food that the plant stores for its seeds to grow. Here in the fynbos the soil is very poor and healthy food is hard to find for a mouse, especially one with babies. Did you know they need to eat a balanced diet with all the different colours of food every day to stay healthy?"

"Really Felix, are you not killing the Protea's babies to feed your own babies"?

"Not really, Stripes. I won't eat all the seeds and I help the protea to spread its seeds so the new baby plants can grow far and wide".

"How do you do that"?

"I carry the seeds to my underground nest, but I leave some of them uneaten. They are safe in my nest and when the rains come they will germinate and grow. So I eat some and I plant some. That



must be good for me and for the protea, right?"

He looked at me and blinked his little round eyes. "So pretty please will you help me to break open the safe"?

And that, children, is how I became a cat burglar.

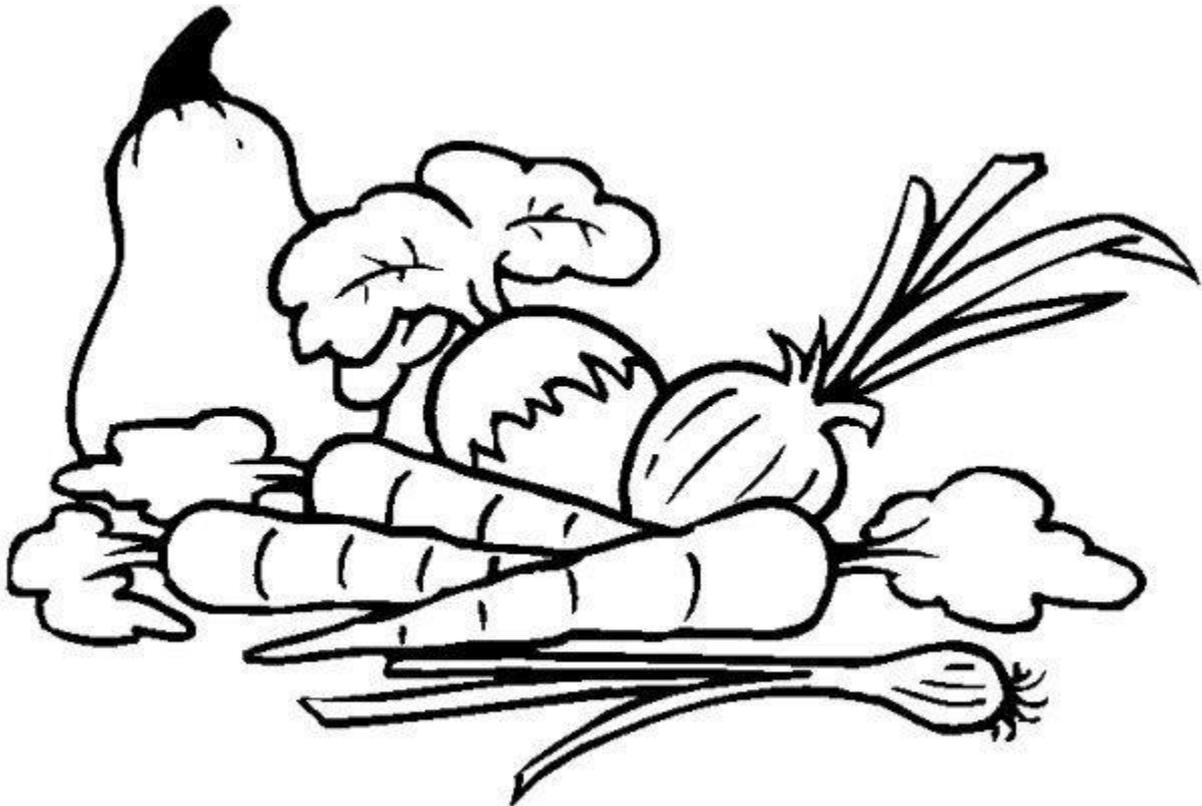
Facts about healthy eating

Fruit and veggies are good for us
Try to eat 3 different colours
Eat eggs, fish or chicken instead of red meat
Drink tap water, not cool drinks
Sugar is bad - you don't need it
Sweets and chips are not healthy.

Class discussion and activity

Can you name a green fruit or vegetable?
And yellow, red or orange?
Why is sugar bad for us?
Can you think of a healthy snack?
Why should we drink tap water?

Colour in the different vegetables. Can you name any of them?



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