



2023-2024 CALENDAR

OUR SPECTACULAR SOIL

"There can be no life without soil and no soil without life." -Charles Kellogg, 1956

Photos by Illinois Farm Bureau® photographers



See inside for more on how soil is connected to each monthly theme!



DAIRY



Cattle manure is often added to soil to provide it with nitrogen and organic matter!

August 2023

dairy, nutrient,
pasteurization, breeds,
gallon, silage, ruminant

It's Milking Time by Phyllis Alsdurf
Tales of the Dairy Godmother:
Chuck's Ice Cream Wish by Viola Butler
Dairy Queen by Catherine Gilbert Murdock

Words & Terms to Learn

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Dairy refers to the food group containing milk and milk products including ice cream, sour cream, butter, yogurt, cheese, buttermilk, and cream cheese.	2 Milk provides your body with calcium, which is needed for healthy bones and teeth. It also provides us with protein, vitamin D, and carbohydrates.	3 There are 7 common dairy cow breeds in the United States. The most common breed is Holsteins, which are black and white.	4 All female cows must have a calf to produce milk.	5
6	7 25 gallons of milk can make 9 gallons of ice cream, 25 pounds of cheese, or 11 pounds of butter!	8 Each year, U.S. dairy farmers provide milk to make more than 1 billion gallons of ice cream and 7 billion pounds of cheese!	9 The average dairy cow produces 8 gallons of milk per day. That is more than 2,300 gallons, or 19,825 pounds of milk each year!	10 Milk is measured in pounds, instead of volumetric measurements like gallons, for more accuracy.	11 The greatest amount of milk produced in 1 year was by a Holstein cow named Selz-Pralle Aftershock who produced over 78,000 lbs. of milk!	12
13	14 Dairy cows drink 30-50 gallons of water per day. That is about an entire bathtub full of water!	15 Dairy cows eat hay, silage, and grain. Silage is fermented corn, wheat, or hay with the stalks and leaves.	16 A dairy cow spends 8 hours per day eating, 8 hours chewing her cud, and 8 hours sleeping.	17 Dairy cattle are called ruminants because they have four compartments in their stomach. This allows them to digest tough food like grasses.	18 A cow turns grass into milk within 2-3 days of digestion!	19
20	21 People were herding dairy cows over 7,500 years ago!	22 Before modern milking machines, a farmer could milk about 6 cows by hand in one hour. Now, farmers can milk over 100 cows in an hour.	23 Most dairy cows are milked 2-3 times per day.	24 Special trucks haul the milk from the farm to the dairy plant. The truck keeps the milk cold - like a giant refrigerator on wheels.	25 Louis Pasteur discovered a process of heating and cooling the milk to kill bacteria and protect the purity and flavors. This process is called pasteurization.	26
27	28 The average American consumes almost 25 gallons of milk a year!	29 National Milk Day is January 11th and June is National Dairy month!	30 Illinois has about 83,000 dairy cows that produce close to 2 billion pounds of milk a year.	31 The dairy industry supplies jobs to over 11,600 Illinois residents.		



HORSES



Before tractors, horses pulled plows across fields to mix organic matter into the soil!

September 2023

domesticate, recreation, thoroughbred, horsepower, gait, ungulate, tack, hippology

Words & Terms to Learn

War Horse by Michael Morpurgo
Horse Power: The Wonder of Draft Horses by Cris Peterson
Off Like the Wind!: The First Ride of the Pony Express by Michael P. Spradlin

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Horses belong to the Equus family. The term Equus come from the ancient Greek word meaning quickness.	2
3	4 Modern day equines are classified into four groups based on their size: miniatures, ponies, light weights, and heavy weights, or draft horses.	5 There are more than 300 different breeds of horses and ponies!	6 Horses have strong teeth, sharp ears, keen eyes, and a good sense of smell.	7 Horses are herbivores, which mean they only eat vegetation, preferably grass and hay.	8 The scientific name for the study of horses is called "hippology."	9
10	11 Horses have lived on Earth for more than 50 million years, evolving from much smaller creatures. They were first domesticated between 4000 and 3000 B.C.	12 Today, horses are used on cattle ranches for rounding up herds of cattle. They are also used by the police, in competitions and racing, and for therapy and recreation.	13 The most expensive horse ever sold was a Thoroughbred racehorse named Fusaichi Pegasus, who was purchased in 2000 for \$70 million!	14 Horses have 10 different muscles in their ears, which allow them to rotate 180 degrees and move independently. Humans only have three!	15 The term "horsepower," coined by engineer James Watt, compares the amount of work done by an engine to the work of 1 horse in 8 hours.	16
17	18 Horseback riding is proven to have therapeutic benefits to humans with physical and mental illnesses and aids people with disabilities.	19 Horses and mules were the only means of power on a farm until the tractor was developed in the early 1900s.	20 The average lifespan of a horse is 20-25 years, although they can live for up to 30 years.	21 The oldest known horse was born in England in 1760. His name was Old Billy and he lived to be 62 years old!	22 You can estimate how old a horse is by looking at their teeth!	23
24	25 Over 25,000 people work in careers directly connected to the horses raised and cared for in Illinois.	26 In Illinois, 645,000 acres of land are used for horse-related purposes.	27 Horses are pregnant for almost a full year!	28 A baby horse is called a foal. When a foal is born, its legs are almost their full adult length.	29 A hand is a unit of measurement when measuring the height of a horse. One hand is equal to four inches.	30



WHEAT



Wheat is a common cover crop, planted in the off-season to protect soil from erosion!

October 2023

edible, kernel, variety, versatile, cotyledon, baler, mill, export, gluten, elastic

Words & Terms to Learn

Who Made My Lunch?: From Wheat to Bread by Bridget Heos
Right This Very Minute by Lisl H. Detlefsen
The Thing About Luck by Cynthia Kadohata

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Cultivated wheat originated in the “cradle of civilization” in the Tigris and Euphrates River Valley, near what is now Iraq.	3 Swiss lake dwellers ground wheat kernels, mixed the flour with water, and baked the first flatbreads as early as 7000-6000 B.C.	4 Wheat is a member of the grass family and produces a dry, edible seed known as a kernel which is used mostly for human consumption.	5 Thousands of varieties of wheat fall into six classes: hard red winter, hard red spring, soft red winter, hard white, soft white, and durum.	6 Most of the wheat grown in Illinois is soft red winter wheat, which is used to make cereals, cakes, cookies, and pretzels.	7
8	9 Because wheat is such a versatile plant, it is being harvested somewhere in the world every month of the year.	10 To “harvest” means to remove the wheat kernels from the wheat plant.	11 A modern combine can harvest 1,000 bushels of wheat per hour.	12 It takes a combine nine seconds to harvest enough wheat to make 70 loaves of bread.	13 After being harvested, wheat kernels are taken to grain elevators for storage and then shipped to flour mills.	14
15	16 Wheat contains a lot of protein, which is an essential nutrient for your survival!	17 Wheat flour contains a protein substance called gluten. Wheat flour is great for baking since the gluten makes the dough elastic.	18 A new variety of wheat can take up to 17 years to develop before it is available for farmers to plant.	19 Never refrigerate any bread products as they will become stale 6 times faster. Leave bread and bagels at room temperature or freeze them.	20 Wheat is the most harvested crop in the world!	21
22	23 About 83% of the wheat produced in Illinois is grown in the southern half of the state, where there is a longer growing season.	24 Kansas produces the most wheat of any state, while Illinois ranks 10th in the nation.	25 Nearly 50% of the U.S. wheat crop is sold and exported to about 60 nations around the world.	26 In 2021, Illinois harvested 670,000 acres of wheat!	27 About 95% of the wheat produced is common wheat (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) also known as bread wheat.	28
29	30 You could make 5,000 four-inch cookies or fill 53 boxes of cereal with one bushel of wheat!	31 One bushel of wheat can make about 90 one-pound loaves of whole-wheat bread!				



SOYBEANS



Soybeans are legumes, which supply nitrogen back into the soil for future plant growth!

November 2023

legume, pollinate, planter, radicle, pod, protein, fiber, consumption, nitrogen

Words & Terms to Learn

Pod to Plate: The Life Cycle of Soybeans
by Julie D. Blunier

The Super Soybean by Raymond Bial
Full of Beans: Henry Ford Grows a Car
by Peggy Thomas

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 The soybean plant is a type of legume. These bushy, green plants grow 3-5 feet tall.	2 Soybeans are a great source of protein and all nine of the essential amino acids, essential vitamins, and minerals.	3 Soybeans are good for crop rotation because they leave nitrogen in the soil for the next crop.	4
5	6 The soybean is used for animal and human consumption, as well as consumer and industrial use.	7 The soybean is one of the most versatile seeds grown in the world.	8 Soybeans can be processed into a fuel called biodiesel, which is the fastest-growing biofuel in the country.	9 Soybean oil is the main edible oil used in the United States. Soybeans are the #1 ingredient in vegetable oil.	10 Many cultures use soybeans as a protein source rather than meat, eggs, or cheese. Soybeans are the highest natural source of dietary fiber.	11
12	13 In the fall, the soybean plant turns brown and the leaves drop off before they are harvested.	14 After harvest, soybeans are transported by trucks, trains, and barges. Barges are used on rivers, like the Mississippi River, and transport the beans to ports for exporting.	15 Today, every Ford vehicle contains 31,251 soybeans, which are processed and used in the foam inside the seats as well as in plastic around the car!	16 Soy ink is used in over 95 percent of America's daily newspapers that circulate more than fifteen hundred copies per run.	17 One bushel of soybeans weighs 60 pounds and can produce 48 pounds of soybean meal. The livestock industry is the largest consumer of soy meal!	18
19	20 Asian countries have been eating soybeans and using by-products from the plant for thousands of years.	21 Farmers in China began growing soybeans more than 5,000 years ago.	22 More soybeans are grown in the United States than anywhere else in the world. The United States produces 55% of the world's soybeans!	23 Illinois plants enough soybeans to cover nine million football fields!	24 Decatur, Illinois is the Soybean Capital of the World.	25
26	27 In 2021, Illinois farmers raised around 672 million bushels of soybeans on just over 10 million acres!	28 Illinois livestock farmers use 623,000 tons of soybean meal annually.	29 One acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.	30 The average American consumes nearly half a cup of soybeans in some form each day.		



POULTRY



Poultry are often fed a diet of corn and soybeans, which require soil to grow!

December 2023

poultry, secrete, preen, grit, fertilize, embryo, coop, omnivore, appendage, vocalization

Words & Terms to Learn

Sonya's Chickens by Phoebe Wahl
Chicks and Chickens by Gail Gibbons
The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County by Janice N. Harrington

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 The term poultry refers to chickens, turkeys, ducks, ostriches, emus, quail, pheasants, geese, or pigeons raised for meat or eggs.	2
3	4 Chickens are omnivores. They eat seeds and insects but will also eat larger prey like small mice and lizards.	5 Chickens raised for their meat are called broilers, while those that produce eggs are called layers.	6 More than 300 breeds of chickens exist but only a few are used for meat-type production.	7 There are approximately 30 distinct vocalizations chickens use to communicate with each other.	8 Each hen lays approximately one egg a day, or about 300 in a year!	9
10	11 Chickens need grit, which is a mixture of angular, hard crushed rock, in their diet to help them digest their food and to produce eggs.	12 You can tell what color egg a hen will lay by the color of her earlobes!	13 Most of the time, hens will not try to hatch the eggs they lay. Sometimes, hens will "go broody", which is when they will sit on eggs for 21 days to hatch them!	14 Chicks do not need to eat for the first 24-48 hours of their life because they absorb the yolk inside their egg just before hatching, which sustains them!	15 Turkeys have roamed North and South America for 10 million years!	16
17	18 By 3000 B.C., Egyptians had domesticated fowl that were laying eggs for humans to eat.	19 In 1620, settlers brought turkeys along on their ships. Although there were wild turkeys in the forests, they wanted domesticated birds for their barnyards.	20 How many feathers does a chicken have? To settle an argument, an Ohio man once took time to count them on one of his chickens. He found 8,325 feathers!	21 Chickens have better vision than humans, which is why roosters can see the sunrise and crow around an hour before humans can see the sunrise.	22 Benjamin Franklin praised turkeys as respectable birds and stated that the turkey was a more noble candidate for the U.S. National Bird.	23
24	25 The average American eats 91 pounds of chicken and about 250 eggs per year.	26 Chicken is the #1 protein consumed in the United States.	27 If you grasp an egg in the palm of your hand and squeeze evenly around it with your fingers, you will not be able to crack it!	28 If all the chickens on earth were evenly distributed among all the people on earth, each person would have at least 3 chickens.	29 Illinois has over 5 million chickens that produce nearly 128 million dozen eggs each year!	30
31						



BEEF



Rotational grazing systems for cattle help spread nutrient-rich manure onto fields of soil!

January 2024

silage, ruminant, grazing, aerate, cloven, gestation, by-product, colostrum

Temple Grandin by Sy Montgomery
The Beef Princess of Practical County
 by Michelle Houts
Thunder Rose by Kadir Nelson

Words & Terms to Learn

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Cattle are a part of the bovine (Bovidae) family, which also includes sheep, goats, bison, and antelopes.	2 Beef is the meat that comes from beef cattle. Hamburger, steak, and brisket are examples of beef.	3 Ground beef is the most popular form of beef. This is what is used to make hamburgers!	4 One serving of beef is 3 ounces and provides more than half of your required protein for the day.	5 You could buy a hamburger for just 5 cents in 1921 and 12 cents in 1950.	6
7	8 Cattle were first domesticated in 6500 B.C.	9 Cattle were first brought to the western hemisphere in 1493 by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage.	10 Columbus' Spanish cattle were also introduced to Mexico and were the foundation to the breed we now know as Texas Longhorn.	11 There are many breeds of cattle. The most popular breed is Angus, which is solid black in color and known for its high quality of meat.	12 There are 50 breeds of cattle in the U.S. Angus is the most popular breed in the U.S., while Brahman is most popular breed in the world.	13
14	15 The gestation (pregnancy) period for cows is 9 months. Depending on the breed, a calf can weigh 60-100 pounds at birth!	16 The first milk produced from the mother after birth, called colostrum, contains antibodies for the newborn calf.	17 Newborn calves must drink their mother's colostrum as soon as possible because they are born with no protection from germs and diseases.	18 A newborn calf drinks its mother's milk and eats grass for the first six months.	19 Beef cattle have cloven, or split, hooves.	20
21	22 Cattle can eat up to 40 pounds of food a day which includes grass, hay, corn, and silage!	23 Silage is fermented corn, wheat, or hay with the stalks and leaves, that is chopped and fed to cattle.	24 Cattle are ruminants. They have four-compartment stomachs that help them digest very tough food like grass.	25 After chewing and swallowing grass, they regurgitate and re-chew the partially digested food. This is called "chewing the cud."	26 While they are out grazing, cattle help scatter seeds, trim wild grass, and aerate the soil with their hooves.	27
28	29 The U.S. supplies 19% of the world's beef supply with 10% of the world's cattle.	30 In 2020, there were close to 1.4 million cattle and calves on Illinois farms.	31 The average American eats 11 steaks per year!			



PORK



Today's pig barns have manure collection programs to help gather manure for soils!

February 2024

fossil, sow, farrow, piglet,
litter, weaned, product, industry,
decibel, wallow

Words & Terms to Learn

Pig 05049 by Christien Meindertsma

Everyone Loves Bacon
by Kelly DiPucchio

The Pig War by Emma Bland Smith

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 The pig dates back 40 million years. Fossils indicate that wild pig-like animals roamed forests and swamps in Europe and Asia.	2 Pigs were domesticated in China around 4900 B.C. By 1500 B.C., they were being raised in Europe.	3
4	5 Pigs are now found on every continent except for Antarctica and there are over 180 species.	6 In 1593 a Spanish explorer named Hernando de Soto landed in Tampa Bay, Florida, with 13 pigs. Within 3 years, his herd grew to over 700.	7 Some of de Soto's pigs ran away into the wild and became the first wild pigs, or Razorbacks, that now roam the southern United States.	8 In Illinois, there are around 2,153 pig farms that raise more than 5.25 million pigs.	9 Illinois ranks fourth in pork production in the United States.	10
11	12 Illinois pig farmers produce 2.1 billion pounds of pork each year. That's more than 6 billion pork chops!	13 Pork is the food product that comes from pigs. Some examples are bacon, ham, ribs, and pork chops.	14 Pork is packed full of nutrients like iron, thiamin, niacin, zinc, and B-vitamins that all help our bodies function and stay healthy.	15 Pigs are given a nutritionally balanced diet consisting of corn, soybeans, vitamins, and minerals to keep them healthy and help them grow.	16 As pigs grow, they can eat up to nine pounds of feed per day.	17
18	19 Manure from pigs is often spread on fields as fertilizer since manure is a great source of the nutrients that plants need to grow.	20 Pork accounts for 40% of all meat consumed worldwide, making it the most consumed animal protein.	21 Americans consume 318 million pounds of ham in the holiday season!	22 Most pigs are raised indoors to keep them safe from extreme weather conditions, predators, and harmful diseases.	23 Pigs cannot sweat! That's why you often see them "wallowing" in mud puddles – to cool off! This is also why they often live inside climate-controlled barns.	24
25	26 The average full-grown pig weighs around 300 pounds.	27 The heaviest pig ever recorded was named Big Bill, who weighed 2,552 pounds!	28 A pig's squeal can be as loud as 115 decibels – that's 3 decibels higher than the sound of a supersonic airliner.	29 A pig's tongue contains 15,000 taste buds! By comparison, the human tongue only has 9,000 taste buds.		



PUMPKINS



Processing pumpkins are grown in vast fields of soil just like corn and soybeans!

March 2024

gourd, native, angiosperm, processing, antioxidant, vine, taproot, ornamental, blossom

Words & Terms to Learn

Pick a Pumpkin by Patricia Toht
Squashed by Joan Bauer
Pumpkinheads by Rainbow Rowell

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 The name pumpkin originated from "pepon," the Greek word for "large melon."	2
3	4 Pumpkins were a staple of Native American diets centuries before the Pilgrims landed.	5 Native Americans taught the Pilgrims their method of planting corn, beans, and pumpkins together, which they called the "Three Sisters."	6 Pumpkins are members of the gourd family, which includes cucumber, honeydew melons, cantaloupe, watermelons, and zucchini.	7 Pumpkins are native to Central America and Mexico but now grow on all continents except Antarctica.	8 Most pumpkin varieties are orange in color. The orange color is a clue that they are full of the antioxidant beta-carotene.	9
10	11 Depending on the variety, pumpkins can range in size from less than one pound to more than 2,000 pounds!	12 Pumpkins are good for your body. The filling is rich in vitamin A and potassium.	13 The taproot of a pumpkin grows 2-3 feet deep. Each pumpkin contains about 500 seeds!	14 Pumpkin vines produce edible flowers that need to be pollinated before eventually turning into a pumpkin.	15 Tiny green buds form at the bottom of the blossoms after pollination. Over time, the buds will grow into larger pumpkins.	16
17	18 Pumpkins grow on vines that can grow up to 30 feet long!	19 It takes 110-120 days for a pumpkin vine to produce mature pumpkins.	20 Most pumpkins are grown for processing into canned pumpkin and canned pie mix.	21 Processing pumpkins are more elongated and have a peach-toned color.	22 Processing pumpkins are harvested in the fall with a machine that moves them into rows, while another elevates them into trucks.	23
24 31	25 Pumpkins grown to be used as jack-o'-lanterns are much bigger and a darker color than processing pumpkins.	26 Ornamental pumpkins (pumpkins used for jack-o'-lanterns and decorations) are picked by hand to avoid bruising and damage.	27 Morton, Illinois, where 85% of the world's canned pumpkin is processed, is considered the Pumpkin Capital of the World.	28 The Libby's canned pumpkin factory in Morton, Illinois, can turn a truckload of pumpkins into processed canned pumpkin in as little as two hours!	29 The heaviest pumpkin on record in the United States was 2,528 pounds and the heaviest pumpkin on record in the world was 2,624 pounds!	30



FARMERS MARKETS



Specialty crop growers often use compost, made of leftover plant material, for fertilizer!

April 2024

local, pollution, Body Mass Index (BMI), Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), income, nutrition

Words & Terms to Learn

On the Farm, At the Market
by G. Brian Karas

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table
by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

I Love Strawberries by Shannon Anderson

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 A farmers market is a local, public, recurring assembly of farmers selling the food they produced directly to consumers.	2 By cutting out middlemen, farmers receive more of our food dollars and shoppers receive the freshest and most flavorful food in their area and local economies prosper.	3 The number of farmers markets in the United States has grown rapidly in recent years, from just under 2,000 in 1994 to more than 8,600 markets currently registered with the USDA.	4 Shopping for fresh produce at farmers markets is good for the planet, as it limits the number of miles the food has to travel, cutting down on pollution, energy costs and more.	5 Proximity to farmers markets is shown to be associated with a lower body mass index (BMI).	6
7	8 Another direct-to-consumer method of selling agricultural products is through Community-Supported Agriculture, or CSA.	9 In a CSA, a consumer buys a share of a farm up-front, which provides financial security to the farmer for that season. In return, the customer receives regular boxes of fresh produce.	10 More than 85% of farmers market vendors traveled fewer than 50 miles to sell at a farmers market, and more than half of farmers traveled less than 10 miles to their market!	11 A study showed that shoppers have more than three times as many social and informational encounters at farmers markets than they do at national chain supermarkets.	12 Selling produce at a farmers market allows farmers to sell "imperfect" products that would otherwise go unsold at a grocery store.	13
14	15 National Farmers Market Week takes place the first week of August.	16 The first American farmers market took place in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1730.	17 Aurora, Illinois, is home to the state's oldest farmers market, which was founded in 1912.	18 8% of U.S. farms sell their food locally through farmers markets.	19 Farmers markets generate \$2.4 billion dollars in sales for American farmers.	20
21	22 Illinois ranks number 3 in the United States for number of farmers markets!	23 There are more than 300 farmers markets in Illinois!	24 There were 31,609 volunteers contributing their time across 5,078 markets in 2020.	25 90% of the income earned at a farmers market goes directly back to the farmer!	26 By comparison, only 16 cents of every dollar spent at a grocery store goes to the farmer.	27
28	29 Every dollar of money spent on farm direct purchases (like at farmers markets) results in a \$3 contribution to the US economy.	30 The average distance a farmer travels to get to a farmers market is 61 miles!				



APPLES



Apple trees grow best in soils that are slightly acidic and well drained!

May 2024

archaeologist, native, gravity, produce, ripen, atmosphere, antioxidant, variety, budding, grafting

Words & Terms to Learn

Applesauce Day by Lisa Amstutz
How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World by Marjorie Priceman
The Apple Orchard Riddle by Margarat McNamara & G. Brian Karas

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Archaeologists have found evidence that humans have enjoyed apples since at least 6500 B.C.	2 The apple tree originated from central Asia, near the Caspian and Black Seas. In 1620, the pilgrims brought apples to the United States.	3 In 1730, the first apple nursery was opened in Flushing, New York.	4
5	6 The crabapple tree is the only apple tree native to North America.	7 Apples are a part of the rose family, which also includes plants like pears, plums, almonds, and roses.	8 The science of growing apples is called "pomology."	9 Apple trees can live for more than 100 years.	10 It takes anywhere from four to ten years for an apple tree to produce its first apple.	11
12	13 Apples have five seed pockets that each contain a seed. When you cut an apple horizontally, you can observe the star-shaped pattern of the seeds!	14 Apples are considered a nutritional powerhouse because they contain a variety of vitamins and nutrients that help our bodies function!	15 Don't peel your apple! Two-thirds of the fiber in an apple and many antioxidants are found in the peel. Antioxidants help reduce cell damage.	16 A medium sized apple has 5 grams of fiber, which is 20% of the recommended daily allowance.	17 Most apple trees are grown by grafting or budding onto existing rootstocks.	18
19	20 Budding and grafting are beneficial for creating new apple varieties! New varieties create new tastes, colors, and resistance to diseases!	21 The blossoms on apple trees need to be pollinated for fruit development. Many apple growers place beehives in their orchards to promote pollination.	22 There are around 5,000 apple growers managing orchards that cover 322,000 acres in the United States!	23 On average, there are 240 million bushels of apples grown in the U.S. each year. That's about 30 billion apples!	24 There are over 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the United States, and over 7,500 grown around the world.	25
26	27 The Red Delicious apple is the most widely grown apple variety in the United States.	28 It took scientists 30 years to create the perfect Honeycrisp apple!	29 The average person eats 65 apples per year!	30 It takes 36 apples to create one gallon of apple cider.	31 Apples are 25% air, which allows them to float. This is what allows us to "bob for apples"!	



CORN



Corn grows so well in Illinois because of our dark, nutrient-rich soils!

June/July 2024

grain, maize, starch, expand,
reaper, thresher, winnower, barge,
export, silk, ethanol

Words & Terms to Learn

The Popcorn Astronauts
by Deborah Ruddell
Corn Belt Harvest by Raymond Bial
Popcorn Country by Cris Peterson

Recommended Reading

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3 Corn is a grain, not a vegetable, and is part of the grass family.	4	5 Three common types of corn are field corn, sweet corn, and popcorn.	6	7 Dent corn, or field corn, is higher in starch and lower in sugar than sweet corn.	8
9	10	11 Compared directly to gasoline, ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 40-50%.	12	13 There is one silk (thread at the top of the ear) for each kernel of corn that will develop!	14	15
16	17 Each corn plant produces just one or two ears of corn in its 120-day life cycle!	18	19 Most corn grown in IL is field corn, which is used for animal feed, processing, & ethanol.	20	21 Ethanol is a renewable fuel made from corn. It is biodegradable and non-pollutant!	22
23 30	24	25 Sweet corn is sweeter because the starch turns into sugar.	26	27 An acre of corn will give off 4,000 gallons of water per day in the form of evaporation.	28	29

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 The world record for the tallest corn stalk is more than 35 feet.	2	3 Over half of all corn grown in the US is grown in the "corn belt": IL, IA, MN, & NE.	4	5 29% of IL corn is used for processing and animal feed and 26% is used to make ethanol.	6
7	8	9 The other 39% of our corn is a surplus, which we export to other states and countries.	10	11 America's corn farmers grow 20% more corn per acre than any other nation!	12	13
14	15 Corn is called maize by most countries, which comes from the Spanish word 'maiz.'	16	17 Popcorn is the official Illinois State Snack Food.	18	19 One bushel of corn weighs 56 pounds & can produce 2.8 gallons of ethanol!	20
21	22	23 One bushel of corn will make enough corn syrup for over 400 cans of Coca-Cola!	24	25 Field corn plants grow brace roots above ground for support.	26	27
28	29 In the fall, the corn plant dies and is harvested with a machine called a combine.	30	31 After the corn is harvested, it is taken to a grain bin where it is dried, stored, and sold.			

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