

Peanut Production

Grade Level: 4-8

Lesson Overview

Peanuts are America's favorite nut. Learn about the global popularity of the peanut by interpreting tables and maps.

Student Objectives

1. Identify and label countries that import or export peanuts on a world map.
2. Identify and label states that grow peanuts on a U.S. map.

Materials

- ✓ United States Peanut Production Worksheet
- ✓ Global Peanut Production and Imports Worksheet
- ✓ World and USA maps

Vocabulary

- **exports** – goods or services that are produced in one country and then sold to buyers in another country
- **groundnuts** – another name for peanuts
- **imports** – goods or services that are bought by citizens, businesses, and the government of one country that are produced in another country
- **legume** – a member of the pea family
- **peanut** - a plant in the pea family that bears the peanut, which develops in pods that ripen underground and are widely cultivated, especially in the southern U.S.

Background Information

The History of the Peanut

The peanut plant probably originated in Brazil or Peru, although no fossil records exist to prove this. Peanuts were grown as far north as Mexico by the time the Spanish began their exploration of the New World. The explorers took peanuts back to Spain, where they are still grown today. From Spain, traders and explorers took peanuts to Africa and Asia. Africans were the first people to introduce peanuts to North America. Eventually, peanuts were planted throughout the southern United States. Today, peanuts are one of America's favorite foods.

The “Father of the Peanut”

George Washington Carver began his research into peanuts in 1903 at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The talented botanist recognized the value of peanuts as a cash crop. He proposed to farmers that peanuts be planted as a rotational crop in their fields. Many farmers found this procedure especially valuable in the southeastern cotton growing areas when insects, called boll weevils, threatened the cotton crops. By listening to the great scientist, peanut production flourished. States growing peanuts today include Georgia, Texas, Alabama, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia, Florida, South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and New Mexico. Carver was able to discover over 300 uses for the peanut, including shaving cream, leather dye, coffee, ink, and shoe polish.



How the peanut plant grows

Unlike other nuts, peanuts do not grow on trees. The peanut is unusual because it grows on a plant that flowers above the ground, but the actual fruits (the peanuts) grow underground. A farmer usually plants his peanuts in April or May. Once planted, peanut seeds grow into a green plant with oval-shaped leaves that reaches about 18 inches in height. From planting to harvesting, the growing cycle of a peanut takes four to five months.

Types of peanuts

Although peanuts come in many varieties, there are four basic market types: runner, Virginia, Spanish, and Valencia. Each of the peanut types is distinctive in size, flavor, and nutritional value. Runner peanuts are known for their consistent, medium kernel size. Runner peanuts are mainly used to make peanut butter. They are also used in candy and snacks. Virginia peanuts are known for their extra-large kernel size. They account for most of the peanuts roasted and processed in the shell. When they are shelled, the larger kernels are sold as snack peanuts. Peanuts known for their smaller kernels and reddish-brown skins are called Spanish peanuts. They are used in peanut

butter, snack peanuts, and peanut candies. The Spanish peanuts also have a high oil content, which allows the oil to be crushed out and extracted for use in cooking. Valencia peanuts are known for having three or more small kernels to a shell and for their bright red skins. Valencia peanuts are very sweet and are usually roasted and sold in the shell.

Where do Peanuts Grow in the U.S.?

Peanuts are grown commercially in thirteen states, with six of these being major peanut producing states. Using 2019 statistics from the National Peanut Board, Georgia grows the largest proportion of peanuts at almost 50%. This is followed by Florida (11%), Alabama (10%), Texas (9%), North Carolina (8%) and South Carolina (4%). The remaining seven states produce 8% of the U.S. peanut crop. These seven states are Mississippi, Virginia, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and New Mexico.

Where are peanuts grown around the world?

Peanuts are grown in the warm climates of Asia, Africa, Australia, and North and South America. The United States is the world's fourth largest producer, after China, India and Nigeria. The bulk of the world's peanut production comes mainly from, China, India, Nigeria, Sudan, Burma, Argentina and Senegal.

U.S. Exports

The United States is one of the world's leading peanut exporters, with the U.S. ranking a close fourth behind Argentina, China and India. The largest export market for U.S. peanuts in 2019 was Canada, followed by Mexico. The U.S. reputation for high-quality products and cost-competitiveness have facilitated exports to countries in the European Union, China, Japan and other countries around the world.

Adapted from National Agriculture in the Classroom lesson, "Nuts About Peanuts!"

<https://www.aqclassroom.org/matrix/lesson/print/266/>

Procedure

1. Have students read the background information page and then apply their knowledge to questions and finding locations on the maps.
2. Have the students complete United States Peanut Production and Global Peanut Production and Imports student worksheets.

Extension Activities

Poll your students on their favorite way to eat peanuts. According to the National Peanut Board, every American consumes an average of 7.6 pounds of peanuts each year. <https://www.nationalpeanutboard.org/news/youre-eating-more-peanuts-than-everthank-you.htm>

Additional Resources

- National Peanut Board: <https://nationalpeanutboard.org>
- How Do Peanuts Grow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CyZI2yD9EY>
- Peanut Farm Field Trip (Cooperative Extension of New Mexico State University): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDZfL9tVVKs>
- 26 Fun Facts About Peanuts and Peanut Butter: <https://www.nationalpeanutboard.org/news/fun-facts.htm>
- How Skippy Peanut Butter Is Made (Food Network): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhYrO6sdARw>
- Peanuts and Forgotten History: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZC-R1QN51I>

Standards

Illinois Social Science Standard

SS.G.1.4 Construct and interpret maps of Illinois and the United States using various media.

Illinois English Language Arts Standard

RI 7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

The **M**ultidisciplinary **A**gricultural **I**ntegrated **C**urriculum (mAGic) was created in 2004 under the leadership of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education Project (FCAE). Funding was made available through the FCAE grant budget from the agricultural education line item of the ISBE budget. This revision, as printed, was developed in April 2021.



These mAGic lessons are designed to bring agriculture to life in your classroom. They address the Illinois Learning Standards in math, science, English language arts and social studies.

Plant mAGic project update writers/reviewers: Rhodora Collins – Dekalb County; Suzi Myers – Kane County; Connie Niemann – Montgomery County; Debbie Ruff – Livingston County; Jennifer Waters – Sangamon County; and Dawn Weinberg – Hancock County.

Name _____

United States Peanut Production Student Worksheet

According to the National Peanut Board, peanuts are grown commercially in 13 states in the U.S. Six (6) of these states produce 92% of the U.S. peanut crop and are identified with their percentage of total crop. Find and label each of the peanut growing states with the corresponding number. Identify the 6 major peanut producing states by circling the number.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Alabama (10%) | 8. New Mexico |
| 2. Arkansas | 9. North Carolina (8%) |
| 3. Florida (11%) | 10. South Carolina (4%) |
| 4. Georgia (50%) | 11. Oklahoma |
| 5. Louisiana | 12. Texas (9%) |
| 6. Missouri | 13. Virginia |
| 7. Mississippi | |

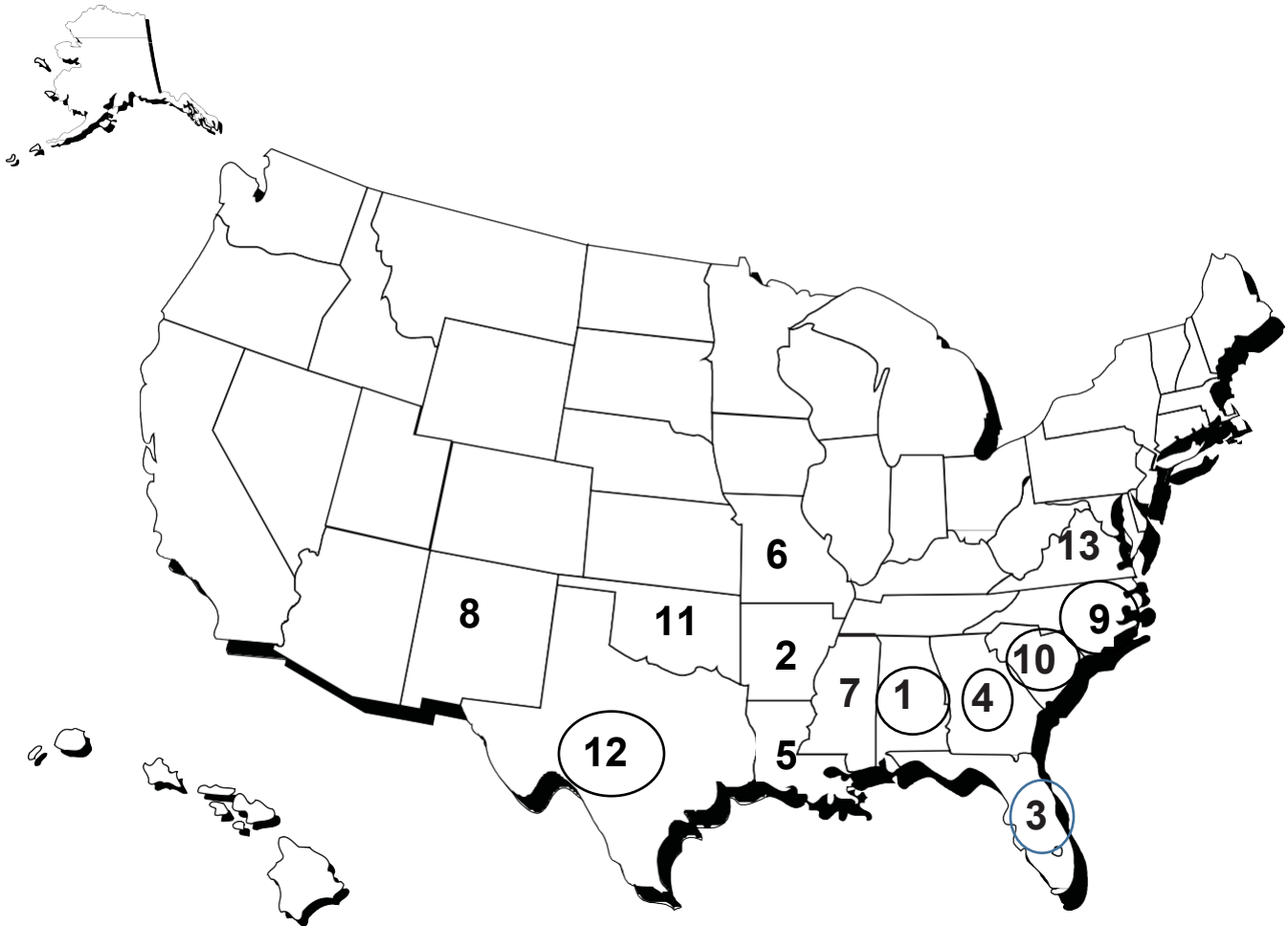


United States Peanut Production ANSWER KEY

According to the National Peanut Board, peanuts are grown commercially in 13 states in the U.S. Six (6) of these states produce 92% of the U.S. peanut crop and are identified with their percentage of total crop. Find and label each of the peanut growing states with the corresponding number. Identify the 6 major peanut producing states by circling the number.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Alabama (10%) | 8. New Mexico |
| 2. Arkansas | 9. North Carolina (8%) |
| 3. Florida (11%) | 10. South Carolina (4%) |
| 4. Georgia (50%) | 11. Oklahoma |
| 5. Louisiana | 12. Texas (9%) |
| 6. Missouri | 13. Virginia |
| 7. Mississippi | |

In which part of the United States are peanuts grown?



Name _____

Global Peanut Production Worksheet

Find the following countries that grow peanuts on the map. Label each of them with the corresponding number.

1. Argentina
2. Cameroon
3. Chad
4. China
5. India
6. Myanmar (Burma)
7. Nigeria
8. Senegal
9. Sudan
10. United States

There are 12 countries that import peanuts from the United States. Locate and label them with the corresponding letter.

- A. Canada
- B. China
- C. France
- D. Germany
- E. Italy
- F. Japan
- G. Korea
- H. Mexico
- I. Netherlands
- J. Portugal
- K. Spain
- L. United Kingdom

Name _____

Global Peanut Production Worksheet



Global Peanut Production ANSWER KEY

