HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Hi! I’m Sprout!

Looking for agriculture-themed Elf on the Shelf ideas? Look no further!

Each page contains ideas for one Elf scene, including:

- A list of suggested materials
- Tips and tricks for setup
- Suggested Note from Sprout
- Ag facts to share
- Activities to pair, book recommendations, & more!

*note: anything underlined is linked in the PDF*
**Materials:**
Empty applesauce container
Apples

**Setup:**
Lay the empty applesauce container on its side with the lid open. Prop the Elf up near it with some apples.

---

**Note From Sprout**
I licked this applesauce container clean but I’m still hungry! I guess it’s my lucky day, because look what I just found...
On average, there are 240 million bushels of apples grown in the U.S. each year. That's about 30 billion apples!

**Book Recommendations:**
- Applesauce Day by Lisa Amstutz
- Apples to Oregon by Deborah Hopkinson
- From Seed to Apple by Anita Ganeri

**Activities to Pair & Other Resources**
- IAITC Apple Lessons: Apple Chain (K-3rd grade)
  Apple Blossom Tree (K-3rd grade)
- IAITC Apple Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), Junior Ag Mag (2nd-4th grade), Reader (6th-12th grade) and Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:**
It takes 36 apples to create one gallon of apple cider.
**Materials:**
Toy Tractor  
Blocks to build a “jack”  
Tools

**Setup:**
Prop the toy tractor up on blocks high enough that the elf can slide under it to make a repair. Scatter tools around the elf’s work station.

**Note from Sprout**
I tried to fire up the tractor to do some carpet farming this morning and it wouldn’t start! I sure hope I can get it fixed!
The first tractor was invented in 1892.

**AG FACT:**
Before tractors, farmers used cattle and horses to pull farm tools like plows!

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- *John Deere, That’s Who!* by Tracy Nelson Maurer
- *Fantastic Farm Machines* by Cris Peterson

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
- NAITC *Machines in Agriculture* Lesson (3rd-5th grade)
- mAGic *Machine Logic Puzzle* Lesson (4th-8th grade)
- John Deere Kids Educational Resources (PK-6th grade)

**AG FACT:**
The first tractor was invented in 1892.
**POP CORN PREDICAMENT**

**Materials:**
Microwave popcorn
Microwave

**Setup:**
Pop 2-3 bags of popcorn. Leave one open on its side inside the microwave, then dump the other bag(s) around it as if the popcorn overflowed. Leave the microwave open with the Elf sitting inside.

We don’t have popcorn at the North Pole, but I heard 14 billion quarts of it are eaten each year in America. I just had to try some, but things got a little out of hand!
AG FACT:
The world’s largest popcorn ball weighed 9,370 lbs and was 12 feet in diameter.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:
- Popcorn Country
  by Cris Petersen
- Let’s Pop, Pop, Popcorn!
  by Cynthia Schumerth

ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES
- IAITC Popcorn Science Lesson (4th–6th grade)
- IAITC Popcorn Reader (6th–12th grade) and Facts for Little Readers (K–1st grade)
- Visit popcorn.org for more information, recipes, and children’s activities!

AG FACT:
Popcorn kernels pop up to 40x their original size!
Unravel the toilet paper (still on the holder) and leave it trailing outside the bathroom door and through the hallways - however much you’d like. Sit the Elf on top of the empty toilet paper roll.

They say, “money doesn’t grow on trees,” but I heard toilet paper does! I wonder how many trees it took to make this roll...
**AG FACT:**
Toilet paper is made with “wood pulp” from 30% softwood trees & 70% hardwood trees.

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- *My Grandpa, My Tree, and Me*
  by Roxanne Troup
- *Because of an Acorn*
  by Lola and Sam Schaefer

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
- IAITC *Comparing Conifer Hardiness* Lesson (4th-6th grade)
- IAITC *Tree Ag Mag* (4th-8th grade) - only available online
- How Toilet Paper is Made Video

**AG FACT:**
A single tree can produce up to 1,500 rolls of toilet paper!
Lay the Elf in the snow angel.

Spread a thin layer of corn starch on a countertop and use your fingers to make an Elf-sized snow angel (you can use the actual Elf to make the snow angel... but be prepared for a mess if you do!). Lay the Elf in the snow angel.

**Materials:**
Corn Starch

**Setup:**
I couldn’t bring any snow inside without it melting, so instead I made a snow angel in this cool product made from field corn!
**AG FACT:** Field corn is processed to make over 4,000 products you enjoy every day!

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- *Slime King* by Catherine Daly
- *Corn* by Gail Gibbons
- *Anna's Corn* by Barbara Santucci

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
- IAITC Oobleck Lesson (4th-8th grade)
- mAGic Tassel to Table Lesson (4th-8th grade)
- IAITC Corn Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), Reader (6th-12th grade), and Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:** One bushel of field corn makes 31.5 pounds of corn starch!
I needed a warm bath after rolling in corn starch, but my water keeps getting cold. Is it okay for me to just leave the water running, right?
**Ag Fact:**
Letting your faucet run for five minutes can waste up to ten gallons of water. Always turn the water off when you’re not using it!

**Book Recommendations:**
- *The Great Big Water Cycle Adventure* by Kay Barnham
- *Water is Water* by Miranda Paul
- *The Water Lady* by Alice McGinty

**Activities to Pair & Other Resources**
- IAITC Water Lessons:
  - Water Cycle In-a-Bag (1st-5th grade)
  - Grow a Snowflake (4th-6th grade)
- IAITC Water Ag Mag (4th-8th grade) and Reader (6th-12th grade)

**Ag Fact:**
Water covers 71% of the earth, but only 2.5% of that is drinkable.
Arrange the Elf and the pie supplies as listed above on the countertop / stovetop.

**Materials:**
- Libby’s canned pumpkin
- Pie pan
- Pie crust
- Other baking supplies as desired

**Setup:**
Arrange the Elf and the pie supplies as listed above on the countertop / stovetop.

**Suggested Note from Sprout**
Did you know that Illinois is first in the country in pumpkin production? One delicious pie made with canned pumpkin from Morton, Illinois, coming right up!
**AG FACT:**
Illinois grows 90-95% of the pumpkins used for processing in the United States.

**Book Recommendations:**
- *Pick a Pumpkin* by Patricia Toht
- *Pumpkin Pie for Sigd: A Holiday Tale* by Jennifer Tzivia Macload
- *The Pie that Molly Grew* by Sue Heavenrich

**Activities to Pair & Other Resources**
- IAITC Pumpkin Lessons: *3D Pumpkin* (3rd-5th grade), *Pumpkin Pie in a Bag* (K-3rd grade)
- IAITC *Pumpkin Ag Mag* (4th-8th grade), *Junior Ag Mag* (2nd-4th grade), *Reader* (6th-12th grade), and *Facts for Little Readers* (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:**
Processing pumpkins are not the same as carving pumpkins!
**Materials:**
Tray/shallow box with potting soil
Mini garden tools (or actual size)
Garden seed packets

**Setup:**
Set up the garden box with the Elf kneeling in front of it, holding garden tools if possible. Set seed packets off to the side.

---

*I'm hungry for some garden-fresh vegetables, so I thought I would just grow some myself!*
**AG FACT:**
One teaspoon of healthy soil contains more organisms than there are people on earth!

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner
- *We Are the Gardeners* by Joanna Gaines
- *A Seed is Sleepy* by Dianna Hutts Aston

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
- IAITC Gardening & Specialty Crop Lessons:
  - *Garden in a Glove* (K-5th grade)
  - *Plant Parts Logic Puzzle* (3rd-8th grade)
- IAITC *Soil Your Undies* Lesson (K-12th grade)
- IAITC *Farm Bites* One-Page Resources

**AG FACT:**
55% of U.S. households have a garden of some kind.
**MATERIALS:**
Christmas Tree

**SETUP:**
Arrange the Elf in your Christmas Tree as if it is climbing up the branches.

---

**NOTE FROM SPROUT**

Don’t mind me, just practicing my climbing! Hey, how old do you think this tree is? Older than you?
AG FACT:
Christmas trees are grown on more than 300,000 acres of land across the country.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

*Pick a Pine Tree*  
by Patricia Toht

*Zee Grows a Tree*  
by Elizabeth Rusch

ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES

IAITC 3D Evergreen Tree Lesson (3rd-5th grade)  
IAITC Christmas Tree Resources Blog Post  
IAITC Christmas Trees Farm Bites  
IAITC Virtual Field Trip with Helmig’s Tree Farm

AG FACT:  
Christmas trees take up to 15 years to grow 6 feet tall!
**Holly Jolly Joy Ride**

**Materials:**
- Elf-sized toy car (Barbie cars work well)
- Corn & soybeans (if you have access)

**Setup:**
Sit the Elf in the driver’s seat of the car. Scatter corn and soybeans around the car.

---

**Suggested Note from Sprout**

Just driving around in my car filled with corn and soybean products! Do you think the police will accept my North Pole driver’s license?
AG FACT:
Corn and soybeans are used to make biofuels - a sustainable fuel source!

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:
- Full of Beans by Peggy Thomas
- The Inventor’s Secret: What Thomas Edison Told Henry Ford by Suzanne Slade

ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES
- IAITC Soybean Plastic Lesson (3rd-7th grade)
- Sitting on Soybeans TED Talk
- IAITC Renewable Energy Ag Mag (4th-8th grade, Reader (6th-12th grade), and Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

AG FACT:
Every Ford vehicle contains 31,251 soybeans in foam in the seats!
**Soda Break**

**Materials:**
- Mini can of soda (or actual size)
- Toy fridge (optional)

**Setup:**
Sit the Elf on the counter or in a chair - next to the fridge, if you have one - with a can of soda in its hand or on the table nearby.

---

**Note from Sprout**
I got thirsty and found this soda in the fridge. It must be healthy for me, because the second ingredient is corn!
99% of the corn grown in the U.S. is processed into feed, food, and fuel products!

**Book Recommendations:**
- *Corn Belt Harvest* by Raymond Bial
- *How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?* by Chris Butterworth

**Activities to Pair & Other Resources**
- IAITC Grain Crops “Zine” (2nd-5th grade)
- *How Corn Syrup is Made* Video
- IAITC Corn Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), *Reader* (6th-12th grade), and *Facts for Little Readers* (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:**
High Fructose Corn Syrup used in soda is 55% fructose.

**AG FACT:**
IAITC Grain Crops “Zine” (2nd-5th grade)
- *How Corn Syrup is Made* Video
- IAITC Corn Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), *Reader* (6th-12th grade), and *Facts for Little Readers* (K-1st grade)
**Follow the Yarn**

**Materials:**
- Yarn
- Toy sheep
- Cotton balls (if you have access)
- OR cotton balls from the store

**Setup:**
Set the end of the yarn and the Note from Sprout in or outside one room of the house or school, then leave a yarn trail to another room where you’ve left the rest of the ball of yarn, the Elf, and a toy sheep and cotton boll.

**Note from Sprout**
Inside this ball of yarn was a clue for what yarn is made of. Follow the trail to find me and see for yourself!
AG FACT:
The fastest sheep shearer in the world sheared a sheep in 39.31 seconds in 2010.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:
If You Want to Knit Some Mittens
by Laura Purdie Salas

Levi Strauss and Blue Jeans
by Nathan Olsen (Graphic Novel)

ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES
IAITC Sweater Weather Weaving Lesson
(3rd-6th grade)

IAITC Cotton Reader (6th-12th grade)

IAITC Sheep Reader (6th-12th grade) and
Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

AG FACT:
Over 50% of spun yarn is made from cotton.
**Garbage Day**

**Materials:**
- Mini garbage can (or make your own)
- Mini recycle bin (or make your own)
- Assorted garbage (some recyclable)

**Setup:**
Arrange the Elf and the trash on the table along with the garbage cans.

**Note from Sprout**
It’s garbage day! Now if only I could figure out which of these things I can recycle...
**AG FACT:**
Almost half of the food in America goes to waste - this food can instead be composted for soil.

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- *The Mess That We Made* by Michelle Lord
- *Reuse this Book!* from Clarion Books
- *Michael Recycle* by Ellie Bethel

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
- IAITC *Circle of Earth Bracelet* Lesson (K-4th grade)
- IAITC *Classroom Vermicomposting* Lesson (K-8th grade)
- IAITC *Sustainability Ag Mag* (4th-8th grade) and *Earth Day Facts for Little Readers* (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:**
Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour.
**Farmers Market**

**Materials:**
Farmers market stand (can make your own or use a small shelf/table)
Assorted fruits and vegetables

**Setup:**
Arrange the Elf and the farmers market materials so it looks like the Elf is selling their produce at the market.

---

**Note from Sprout**

Pile it high and watch it fly!
Remember those vegetables I planted? Now you can enjoy the fruits of my labor!
AG FACT: Illinois ranks 3rd in the country in number of farmers markets with more than 300 markets!

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:
On the Farm, At the Market by G. Brian Karas
Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES
IAITC Farmers Market Lessons:
Design a Farmers Market Booth (K-5th grade)
Farmers Market Scavenger Hunt (2nd-5th grade)
IAITC Farmers Market Ag Mag (4th-8th grade) and Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

AG FACT: Farmers Markets generate $2.4 billion for the U.S. economy.
Set up the Elf as if it has just come inside from collecting chicken eggs, propped up next to a basket of fresh eggs with a toy chicken nearby.

**Materials:**
- Eggs
- Basket or egg carton
- Toy chicken (optional)

**Setup:**
Set up the Elf as if it has just come inside from collecting chicken eggs, propped up next to a basket of fresh eggs with a toy chicken nearby.

---

**Note from Sprout**
It’s a good thing chickens lay about 300 eggs a year, because I could eat omelets for breakfast every day!
**AG FACT:**
The average American eats 91 pounds of chicken and about 250 eggs per year.

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
Sonya's Chickens by Pheobe Wahl

The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County by Janice Harrington

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
IAITC Egg-cellent Embryology Lesson (3rd-6th grade)
mAGic Egg Anatomy Lesson

IAITC Poultry Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), Reader (6th-12th grade) and Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:**
You can tell what color eggs a hen will lay by the color of her earlobes.
**SIZZLIN’ SPROUT**

**Materials:**
- Bacon
- Frying pan
- Spatula

**Setup:**
Lay the package of bacon and the frying pan on the stove top or countertop with the Elf sitting next to it holding a spatula.

**Suggested Note from Sprout**
You know what else my omelet needs? Bacon. Bacon is always the answer.
SIZZLIN’ SPROUT

Additional Resources

AG FACT:
Illinois pig farmers produce 2.1 billion pounds of pork each year. That’s more than 6 billion pork chops!

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

Pigology: The Ultimate Encyclopedia
by Daisy Bird

The Pig War: How a Porcine Tragedy Taught England and America to Share
by Emma Bland Smith

ACTIVITIES TO Pair & OTHER RESOURCES

IAITC Pork Lessons:
Paper Bag Pig Puppet (K-2nd grade)
Farm Animal Flip Book (2th-5th grade)

IAITC Pork Ag Mag (4th-8th grade),
Reader (6th-12th grade), and
Facts for Little Readers (K-1st grade)

AG FACT:
Pork accounts for 40% of all meat consumed worldwide.
BEE MERRY

**Materials:**
- Small cardboard box
- Honey
- Honey stirrer (optional)

**Setup:**
Decorate the outside of the box with honeycomb shapes and bees. Sit the Elf beside the box with the honey and a honey stirrer, if you have one.

---

**Note from Sprout**
The honey I just harvested from this beehive is so delicious, it’s un-bee-lievable!
Pollinators, like bees, play a critical role in food production by allowing plants to produce fruits and vegetables.

**Book Recommendations:**
- *Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera* by Candace Fleming
- *Give Bees a Chance* by Bethany Barton
- *Flower Talk* by Sara Levine

**Activities to Pair & Other Resources**
- IAITC Pollinator Lessons: *Build a Bee Hotel* (2nd-5th grade)
- *The Bees Knees and More* (3rd-6th grade)
- *Powder-Powered Pollination* (K-3rd grade)
- IAITC Pollinator Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), *Reader* (6th-12th grade) and *Facts for Little Readers* (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:** One out of every 3 bites of food you eat exists because of pollinators.
**More S’mores, Please!**

**Materials:**
- Mini campfire OR a few small sticks
- Lawn chair (optional)
- S’more supplies (Elf-sized OR actual size)

**Setup:**
- Set the Elf up around the campfire with a marshmallow on a stick, with other s’more supplies nearby.

**Note from Sprout**
- Just making my favorite roasty-toasty campfire treat! I wonder what marshmallows are even made of...
More S’mores, Please!

Additional Resources

**Ag Fact:**
S’mores are made with 3 plant-based ingredients: marshmallows (sugar), chocolate (cacao), and graham crackers (wheat)!

**Book Recommendations:**
- From Wheat to Bread by Bridget Heos
- From Cocoa Beans to Chocolate by Bridget Heos
- Hero for the Hungry by Peggy Thomas

**Activities to Pair & Other Resources**
- IAITC Wheat Milling Lesson (K-4th grade)
- IAITC Recipes
- Homemade Graham Crackers Recipe
- How Marshmallows Are Made Video

**Ag Fact:**
One bushel of wheat can make about 20 boxes of graham crackers!
MATERIALS:
- Toy dairy cow
- Mini milk bucket
- Milk (Elf-sized or actual size)

OPTIONAL: Milk truck

SETUP:
Stand or sit the Elf next to the dairy cow with the milk bucket, with the milk and the optional milk truck nearby.

NOTE FROM SPROUT
Milking a cow sure is tiring... thank goodness for new milking technology that lets me have dairy products without the sore hands!
**AG FACT:**
Each year, U.S. dairy farmers provide milk to make more than 1 billion gallons of ice cream and 7 billion pounds of cheese!

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- *Tales of the Dairy Godmother: Chuck's Ice Cream Wish* by Viola Butler
- *Clarabelle: Making Milk and So Much More* by Cris Peterson
- *It's Milking Time* by Phyllis Alsdurf

**ACTIVITIES TO PAIR & OTHER RESOURCES**
- IAITC Dairy Lessons: *Moo Mask* (K-2nd grade)
- *Beautiful Bovine* (2nd-4th grade)
- www.whereismymilkfrom.com
- IAITC Dairy Ag Mag (4th-8th grade), *Reader* (6th-12th grade) and *Facts for Little Readers* (K-1st grade)

**AG FACT:**
The average American consumes almost 25 gallons of milk a year!
**GAME NIGHT**

---

**Materials:**
Board games  
Card games

**Setup:**
Arrange the games on the table or floor around the Elf sitting in the middle.

---

**Suggested Note from Sprout**

I’ve had so much fun with you this holiday season and I can’t wait to see you again next year! Until then... want to play a game?
AG FACT:
Illinois’ top five agricultural commodities are: corn, soybeans, hogs, cattle, and pumpkins.

WINTER/HOLIDAY BOOKS:
- Mr. Willowby’s Christmas Tree by Robert Barry
- Christmas Farm by Mary Lyn Ray
- Sleep Tight Farm by Eugenie Doyl

AG FACT:
Need a snack while you play? Popcorn is Illinois’ official state snack food.

CHECK OUT OUR IAITC GAMES:
- Spot IL!
- Corn Soy Hogs Cattle Pumpkin
- Water Cycle Jenga
- Good Bugs, Bad Bugs Memory
- ...and more!
Thank you for playing with us!

Share your Sprout-inspired Elf shenanigans with us at:

@agintheclassroom

@ilaitc

Have yourself a very happy holiday!