

Apple Activity

Younger Students (K – 3rd grade):

Begin with a story about apples:

Apples, by Ken Robbins. Atheneum, 2002. 32 p. Young readers will learn how apples grow, from the planting of a tree, to the pollination of buds by bees, and on to the harvest.

Bring Me Some Apples and I'll Make You a Pie: A Story About Edna Lewis, by Robbin Gourley. Clarion Books, 2009. 45 p. Long before the natural-food movement gained popularity, before greenmarkets sprouted across the United States, Edna Lewis championed purity of ingredients, regional cuisine, and the importance of bringing food directly from the farm to the table. She was a chef when female chefs---let alone African American female chefs---were few and far between, and she received many awards for her work.

Apples to Oregon: Being the (Slightly) True Narrative of How a Brave Pioneer Father Brought Apples, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Grapes, and Cherries (and Children) Across the Plains, by Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Carpenter. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004. [unpaged]. A pioneer father transports his beloved fruit trees and his family to Oregon in the mid-nineteenth century. Based loosely on the life of Henderson Luelling.

The Life and Times of the Apple, by Charles Micucci. Scholastic, 1995. 32 p. New books on apples are published regularly, but this one is outstanding. Concisely, yet with contagious enthusiasm, Micucci (who, as part of his research, planted exactly 23 apple seeds in his N.Y.C. apartment) describes the lifecycle of the apple and its culture.

Apple Harvest, by Calvin Harris. Capstone Press, 2008. 24 p. Simple text and photographs present an apple harvest in the fall.

Golden Delicious : A Cinderella Apple Story, by Anna Egan Smucker. Albert Whitman & Co., 2008. [unpaged] Based on real events, this story of how the Golden Delicious apple came to be is ideal for discussions on nature and growing fruits and vegetables.

Fall Apples: Crisp and Juicy, by Martha E. H. Rustad and Amanda Enright. Millbrook Press, 2012. 24 p. Discusses how apples grow and how to use them, including pies and cider.

See also list from AHL 10 Plants reading list

(<http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/UserFiles/File/10PlantsResourceListForKids.pdf>)

Then as a group, ask the children to come up with food items that contain apples (apple pie, applesauce, apple cider, etc.). After this, see if they know or have heard of common varieties such as Granny Smith, Red Delicious, or Golden Delicious. Allow the students to try some of each of these types. Then offer them some Minnesota varieties such as the Honeycrisp, SweeTango®, or Keepsake. Ask the students which ones they liked better and why (such as if the flavor was better if sweet or sour, or the texture, or if they liked the soft apples or the crisp ones).

If possible, have some common apple foods such as apple pie or apple crisp or cider and have a class “picnic”.

Items needed for this activity:

Book to read; list of apple food items; apples, plates, knives, napkins, flip chart to write on students taste descriptions and ratings of each variety

Additional Activities:

What can you make with Apples?

Begin a game by dividing into small teams of 3 or 4 children. In the groups they should list as many apple food items in 3 minutes. The catch on this game is that points are only given if other groups do not have the same dish. This will encourage them to be creative when thinking about the many uses of apples and get competitive. The winning group may have rights to be the first to get a small plate of the apple dishes (if there is a potluck).

Apple Stars

Next cut open an apple to show how the seeds form a star at the center. Talk about how within an apple, each seed is different, just like people and how in order to produce a new variety.

Ask if any students have heard of the Honeycrisp and see if they can guess how old it is (about 50 years old). Bring out apples for them to try, especially parent/offspring pairs (such as the Honeycrisp and SweeTango®) and see if they can taste the difference, or list common traits such as crispness and sweet flavor.

Offer a field trip to go apple picking at a local orchard or go to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum’s Apple House.