

Apples

Educator | VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org

Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.



History of Apples

Apple trees originated in central Asia; they were brought to North America by European settlers in the 1600s. These fruits thrive in temperate climates because they need a period of cold and dormancy in order to prosper; therefore, they are not cultivated in tropical climates. Apples are in the Rosaceae (rose) family, along with almonds, cherries, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, and strawberries.

Fun Facts

- In 1905, the U.S. Department of Agriculture published a 400 page book listing more than 14,000 distinct types of apples grown in the United States.
- The only apples native to North America are crab apples.
- Apple trees must cross-pollinate in order to produce fruit; therefore, they need to be planted within approximately 100 feet of another cultivated apple tree variety, crab apple tree, or wild apple tree.
- Johnny Appleseed's real name was John Chapman. He started several different tree nurseries and sold apple trees to other white settlers who were heading west.
- One bushel of apples produces about 3 gallons of cider.

Reading Corner

Children's Books

- » *Apples*, by Gail Gibbons
- » *Apples, Apples, Apples*, by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace
- » *Apple Picking Time*, by Michele Slawson
- » *Applesauce Season*, by Eden Ross Lipson
- » *How do Apples Grow?*, by Betsy Maestro
- » *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*, by Marjorie Priceman
- » *Johnny Appleseed*, by Steven Kellogg
- » *Our Apple Tree*, by Görel Kristina Näslund
- » *Rain Makes Applesauce*, by Julian Scheer
- » *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree*, by Gail Gibbons

Local Spotlight

2014 Vermont Orchards Listing:
<http://www.vermontapples.org/orchard-listing.php>

Sources: Elmore Roots Nursery, *The Visual Food Encyclopedia*, Vital Communities.



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Benefits

Apples are a good source of potassium, vitamin C, and fiber.

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CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

English | Create Your Own Apple

Supplies needed:

Five apple varieties, knife, cutting board, plates or napkins, journal sheet for taste test observation and for describing and drawing an invented apple variety.

Directions:

- Explain to students that a single food can have many varieties, such as apples, carrots, kale, potatoes, and tomatoes. They have different features, including color; texture, taste, size, disease resistance, and storage length.
- Pass out a slice of each variety to each student. Have them write down descriptive words of what they taste, such as: crisp, firm, soft, mealy, tart, sour, sweet.
- Building upon the taste test experience, ask students to describe and draw their own apple variety.
- Have students share one or two key features of their apple.

Science | Seasons of an Apple Tree

Supplies needed:

Worksheet divided into four sections (one for each season), colored pencils, *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree*, by Gail Gibbons or *Our Apple Tree*, by Görel Kristina Näslund.

Directions:

- *Guiding Question:*
How does an apple tree change from season to season?
- Read one of the recommended books.
- Pass out the journal sheet and colored pencils.
- Ask students to recall the changes they observed while reading the book, then draw what is unique about an apple tree in each season.
- *Key characteristics:*
Spring: buds, blossoms, some leaves
Summer: full of leaves, apples beginning to grow
Fall: ripe apples on the tree, some apples on the ground, leaves change, leaves fall
Winter: bare branches, snow collects on bare branches

Math | Apple Symmetry

Supplies needed:

Three apples per student pair, knife, cutting board, journal sheet for drawing observations

Directions:

- Cut the apples in half, stem-side up.
- Ask the students to compare one side to the other. Does the apple look the same on both sides? To determine if the apple is symmetrical, you can have students place a string across the middle of the slice.
- If the slice does not look the same on each side, introduce the word asymmetry.
- Take the second round of apples and cut in half along the middle of the apple, perpendicular to the cut made on the previous apples.
- How does the interior of the apple compare to the previous cut?
- You can continue this exploration by cutting the third round of apples on diagonals.
- Throughout this process, you can have students draw what they observe or create block prints with paint.

Source: *Math in the Garden: Hands-On Activities That Bring Math to Life.*