



Upper Valley Farm to School Network Community Curriculum Project

October 2012 - Apples

Overview: Students will learn some fun facts about apples and dispel apple myths through a brief, interactive activity. Next they'll do a hands-on sequencing activity to learn how we get apples from seeds. Then they will taste several varieties of apples, and describe the differences. To learn about the importance of apples in the past and today, they'll examine props representing different ways in which apples are important and record the reasons each prop represents in a Venn diagram comparing the past and the present. In closing, they will record one or more reasons that apples were or are important in their Farm to School Community Curriculum Project journals.

Standards Addressed:

Vermont Standard 6.4: Students identify major historical eras and analyze periods of transition in various times in their local community, in Vermont, in the United States and in various locations worldwide to understand the past, the present and the relationship between the two. This is evident when students:

- a. Demonstrate understanding of concepts of past, present and future (e.g., create time lines, create chronologies based on narratives, compare and contrast family life, or school and community life in different periods)

Common Core State Standard for Writing: Text Types and Purposes: 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

Focus Question: Why are local apples important in Vermont and New Hampshire?

Preparation: Expect to spend about half an hour slicing apples, photocopying, cutting apart and shuffling the sequencing cards (make sure they aren't in order!), gathering props for the importance of apples activity, and cutting in half card stock to make journal pages.

Materials:

- Growing apples sequencing activity:
 - 1 copy of the sequencing cards for every pair of students (depending on group/age)
- Heirloom apple taste test:
 - 4-6 different kinds of heirloom apples, 2-3 of each kind, sliced, kept separate and labeled
- Importance of apples activity:
 - Bag with props/cards representing reasons apples are important
 - See attached prop list for ideas/options

- Venn diagram template for each student
- Journal writing:
 - Journal page for each student (half a piece of card stock)
 - Pencils
 - Colored pencils

Procedure:

Hand out teacher survey: Before you start, give the teacher a copy of the survey, and ask if they can fill it out at the end of the lesson before you leave.

Introduction (2 min): Introduce yourself, why you're here – e.g. "I'm Chloe and I'll be coming to your class 6 times this year to teach you about food and farming." Also introduce the topic for the day, and ask the focus question and write it on the board.

Apple facts and myths activity (3 min): "We're going to see how much you know about apples already. I'm going to say something about apples. If you think it's a true fact, stand up and shake your head yes. If you think I'm lying, and it's false and not really true, stay in your seat and shake your head no. It's ok if you get some wrong, just make your best guess." Read some or all of the facts on the attached "Apple Facts and Myths" page, asking the students to guess which are true and which aren't and then telling them the truth after they guess.

Growing apples sequencing activity (10 min): Ask students "How do we get apples anyways? Where do they come from?" Take a few responses. Then explain that there are a lot of steps that go into growing apples. With younger students (K-2), go over what each card represents (out of order though). Explain that students will try to put them in the right order. Give a deck to each student or pair of students, and give them 5 minutes to arrange them. Then ask a few students or pairs to share the sequence they came up with. Find and discuss the correct order as a class.

Heirloom apple taste test (10 min): Ask, "Is every apple the same?" and then explain that there are different kinds of apples, and that "You're going to see if you can taste the difference!" Say the name of a variety, and write it on the board. Then have each student taste it. Ask them to describe what it tastes like, and record the words they say. For younger kids, you might need to give them some examples of words to use (sweet, sour, tart, tangy, crunchy, soft, mushy). Do this for every variety. Then ask the class to vote on their favorite. Record the votes in a chart with tallies.

Importance of apples activity (15): Hand out a Venn diagram template (attached) to each student, and explain how a Venn diagram works. Draw your own Venn diagram on the board. "We're going to use our Venn diagram to compare how apples used to be important here 100 or 200 years ago, and how they are important now." Label one circle "Past," and one circle "Present" or "Today." Have students brainstorm reasons apples are and were important. Use props (see attached "List of Apple Props" for ideas) to prompt them. Guide them to record the reasons in the appropriate part of their Venn diagram (ask them where a reason should go, correct them if necessary, record the reason in one or two words on the board, then give them a little time to record it in their own diagram). When you run out of reasons or time, review the diagram and what it means with the class. Then move on to journal writing.

Write in journal about why apples are important (10 min): Explain to students that they'll be writing about food every time you come in, and that at the end of the year,

they'll put all the pages they'll each make together into a beautiful book that they'll get to take home and keep forever. Ask them to write at least one reason why local apples are or were important, and draw a picture that illustrates that reason. For second grade and up, ask for full sentences. For third and fourth graders, ask for one reason they were important in the past and one reason they are important now. Remind students that they can use their Venn diagram

Collect assessments: Before you leave, be sure to collect the teacher's completed survey, the students' Venn diagrams, and the students' journal pages.

Extensions:

- Extend the heirloom apple taste test into a version of Shelburne Farms' Posy Poetry activity (lesson plan attached, simply substitute different kinds of apples for the different kinds of flowers).
- Chart the votes from the taste test in a pie chart and/or a bar graph.
- Ask students to invent a variety of apple – they will name it, describe why it's worth growing (e.g., it tastes a little like strawberries, it lasts a long time, it is a beautiful pink color), and make an illustration of their imaginary apple variety
 - Read a children's book about apples (focused on either their growth or the history of apple growing in the U.S.) – a list of suggestions compiled by VT FEED is attached to this lesson plan.
 - Sing an apple song (see Shelburne Farms' Apple Songs sheet, attached)
 - Visit an apple orchard.
 - Discuss some of the more complicated parts of apple reproduction – pollination, grafting, the difference between an heirloom and a hybrid (see background information from Cedar Circle Farm).
 - Do the "It's a Small World" lesson, which uses apples to demonstrate the finite nature of earth's resources.

Acknowledgements:

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Shelburne Farms developed the apple life cycle sequencing cards. The Posy Poetry activity is from pages 225-6 of Shelburne Farms Project Seasons: Hands-On Activities for Discovering the Wonders of the World by Deborah Parrella, published by Shelburne Farms in 1995.

The list of children's books and the Apple Songs sheet are both from Lesson 4 of Terry W. Ferland's unit "Healthy Choices: Life Skills for Informed Decision Making" in VT FEED's guide "Vermont Farm to School Food, Farm, & Nutrition Curriculum Units."

The "Fact Sheet" Heirloom vs. Hybrid" was created by Cedar Circle Farm.

The "It's a Small World" lesson plan is from pages Healthy Foods Healthy Soils by Elizabeth Patten and Kathy Lyons, published by Tilbury House in 2003.

The "Medicinal Uses of Fruits and Fruiting Plants" sheet was written by Michael Phillips.

Appendices:

- Teacher survey
- Apple facts and myths sheet
- Apple sequencing cards
- List of apple props
- Venn diagram template
- Extension and background materials
 - List of “Children’s Books about Apples”
 - “Apple Songs” sheet
 - “Fact Sheet: Heirloom vs. Hybrid”
 - “It’s a Small World” lesson plan
 - “Medicinal Uses of Fruits and Fruiting Plants”