

Agriculture in the Classroom Monthly Update – Nov. 2011:

Teacher of the Year Applications are Due December 2:

Teacher of the Year recognition is given annually to two Nebraska certified K-8 teachers who creatively bring agriculture into their classrooms while meeting Nebraska State Standards. The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Farm Bureau Ag Promotion Committee and the Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom Program. The teachers are presented with an award recognizing their achievement and receive an all-expense paid trip to the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference. Fill out an application today!

Applications can be found at:

http://www.ne-aitc.org/pdf/2012TeacherOfYear_app.pdf

Agricultural Books of the Year:

The Children's Agriculture Books of the Year program rewards outstanding contributions to children's literature with an agricultural theme. The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Farm Bureau Ag Promotion Committee. Two books are selected annually, one for grades K-3 and one for grades 4-5. A panel of teachers, administrators and committee members select the winners from a group of books submitted by publishers across the nation. Check upcoming updates for a list of our top selections.

AITC New Features:

Check us out on Facebook under Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom. We are posting program updates, photos and videos daily!

We also have added a link to our website called "Ask an Agricultural Question" - If your class ever comes across a question regarding agriculture they want answered right away, come to our website at www.agclassroom.org/ne and look for the question mark.

Featured Classroom Activities of the Month:

1. As you begin fall activities, why not teach about the life cycle of a pumpkin? Below is a great activity for your classroom along with some great suggestions for literacy choices. Plus, it is set to Nebraska State Standards.

2. There is also an activity to build 3-D pumpkins with your students along with a supplemental Pumpkin AgMag for cool pumpkin facts and materials. Check out the website at:

<http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/aitc/presentations/Make%20%20Takes%20handouts/3D%20Pumpkins/3D%20Pumpkins%20handout.pdf>

The Pumpkin Cycle

Objective:

Use a model and follow directions to understand the pumpkin life cycle.

Nebraska State Standards:

Science 2.3.1.c – Identify external parts of plants.

Science 2.3.2.b – Describe how living things change as they grow.

Science 2.3.4.a – Recognize seasonal changes in plants.

Materials:

Orange paper plates; two per student

Construction paper in brown (seed), dark green (leaf), yellow (blossom), light green (small pumpkin), orange (large pumpkin) and black (face)

Brown or green yarn; five pieces per student, 6-8" long

Tape, Scissors, Stapler, Hole punch

Activating Prior Knowledge:

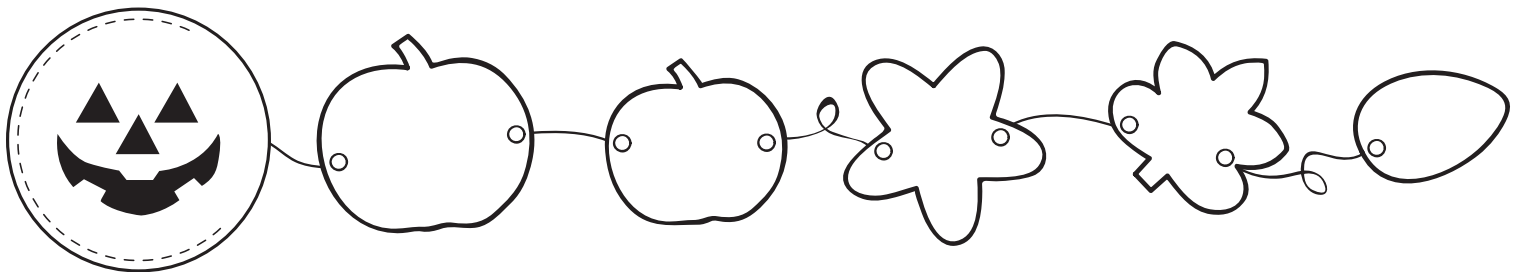
Before beginning this activity, discuss with students the definition of a life cycle. Then, read books such as Pumpkin Circle: The Story of a Garden, Pumpkin Jack, or The Pumpkin Patch to reinforce the life cycle of a pumpkin. Finally, explain the lesson to the students.

Procedure:

1. Have each student draw a jack-o-lantern face with a black Magic Marker on the colored side of one of the paper plates.
2. Staple the paper plates together around the edges with the orange sides facing outward. Make sure to leave enough space on one side of the pumpkin to pull the seed, leaves, flower and growing pumpkins out with the pieces of yarn.
3. Use cardboard patterns of the different stages of a pumpkin or have students design their own pieces on construction paper.
4. Punch holes on each side of all of the pieces except the seed. (Since it is the last shape of the chain only one hole is needed.) Tie pieces of yarn between each piece according to the cycle of a pumpkin. (See figure for the correct order of pieces.) Tape the first piece of yarn inside the jack-o-lantern.
5. When the pieces are assembled, stack the shapes neatly and place them in the opening of the paper plate jack-o-lantern.

Closure:

Discuss the activity by starting with the seed shape, and slowly pull out shapes of the pumpkin as you tell the story of how pumpkins grow.



3D Pumpkins Illinois Ag in the Classroom

Materials

- orange construction paper
- 2 paper fasteners for each pumpkin
- green construction paper for vines
- paper punch
- scissors

Instructions

- Cut 3 strips about 1 in. wide down the short side of the orange paper.
- Holding the strips together in a stack, use a paper punch to make 3 holes in the strips –1 in the middle and one ½ in. from each end.
- Still holding the strips together, put a paper fastener in the middle hole.
- Trace your hand for the leaf- **DO NOT SPREAD YOUR FINGERS APART**- and/or cut strips of green and curl them with a pencil for vines.
- Punch a hole in leaf and vine and put a paper fastener through the hole. Bring up the ends of the long orange strips and fasten them all together.
- Spread out the paper strips to form a pumpkin.



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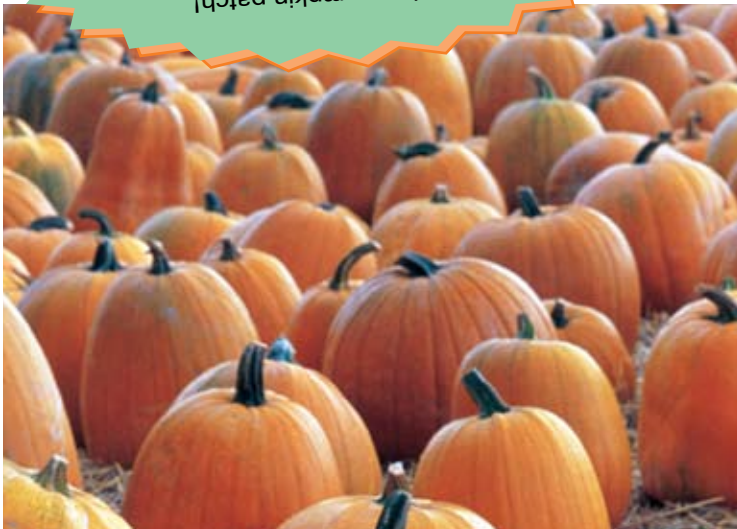
#1 in Pumpkins

Illinois farmers grow more pumpkins than anywhere else in the world! In fact, they grow 90% of the pumpkins used for processing. Most of that processing takes place in **Morton, Illinois** – The Pumpkin Capital of the World.



Q: How do you mend a broken Jack-o-lantern?

A: With a pumpkin patch!



Pumpkin Blossom: Pumpkins grow on a vine. Through pollination, they start by growing inside a flower. Insects help pollinate pumpkin blossoms.



Mid Season Pumpkin: After pollination, a tiny green pumpkin starts to grow at the base of the flower. Over time, this bud grows in size and changes in color from green to yellow, and finally to orange.



Mature Pumpkin: Pumpkins are harvested when they are a deep, solid orange color and the rind is hard.

Pumpkins on Parade

Throughout Illinois, people celebrate pumpkins. In the months of September and October there are a variety of exciting pumpkin activities all over the state. Have you ever picked your own pumpkin out of the field? Many pumpkin farms in Illinois have acres of land for you to explore and pick your own perfect pumpkin right out of the patch. You can also discover the many varieties of pumpkins; some pumpkin farms have over 400 varieties!

Take the day and travel to one of Illinois' 71 pumpkin farms or even join in a festival. No matter where you end up, between the petting zoo, corn maze, shops and food, you are sure to enjoy all of the activities Illinois pumpkin farms have to offer. To find a pumpkin farm near you, go to www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/pumpkins/pumpkinfarms.cfm.

Trick or Treat, Smell My Feet

Did you know that trick or treating started in Ireland, too? People would leave treats for evil spirits who went door to door looking for food. If the spirits were not happy with the treats, they would play tricks on good people. Today, trick or treating means dressing up as spirits, ghosts and other creatures to get treats like candy and gum.

When it comes to candy and snacks, Illinois is a very sweet place to live. There are many candy and snack-making companies in Illinois. Illinois farmers grow many of the ingredients needed to make your favorite candy and snacks. Read the sentences below and follow the directions.

1. If you have visited a pumpkin patch, color the pumpkins orange. If you have not visited a pumpkin patch, color them red.
2. If you know where Tootsie Rolls are made, color the hay bales yellow. If you do not know where they are made, color them brown.
3. If you go trick-or-treating, color the scarecrow's hat purple and the face yellow. If you do not go trick-or-treating, color the hat blue and the face orange.
4. If you know where the Pumpkin Capital of the World is, color the leaves orange. If you do not know, color them green.
5. If you like pumpkin pie, color the rake brown. If you do not like pumpkin pie, color the rake green.
6. If you know where Kitchen Cooked chips are made, draw corn stalks in the background. If you do not know where they are made, draw a sun in the sky.
7. Butterfingers and Baby Ruth candy bars are made in Franklin Park, Illinois. If you have eaten a Butterfinger, color the scarecrow's pants blue and the shirt green. If you have not eaten one, color the pants red and the shirt orange.



Pumpkins and Halloween

Are Turnips Scary?

Have you ever carved a face into a pumpkin? Do you know how this tradition got started?

Jack-o-lanterns started centuries ago in Ireland.

People carved frightening faces into turnips, put a candle in them, and placed them in their windows to scare away an evil ghost. The ghost was called *Jack of the Lantern*.



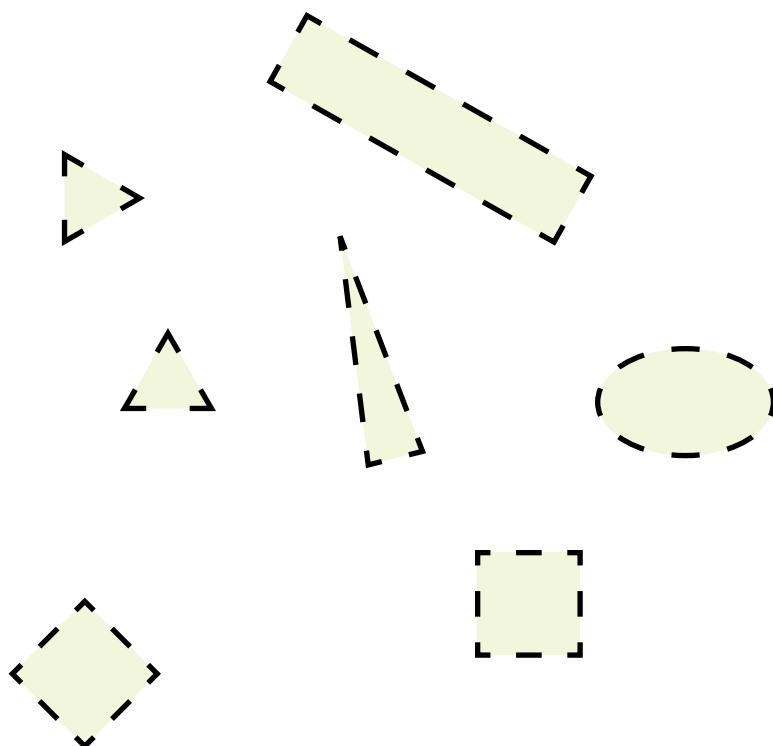
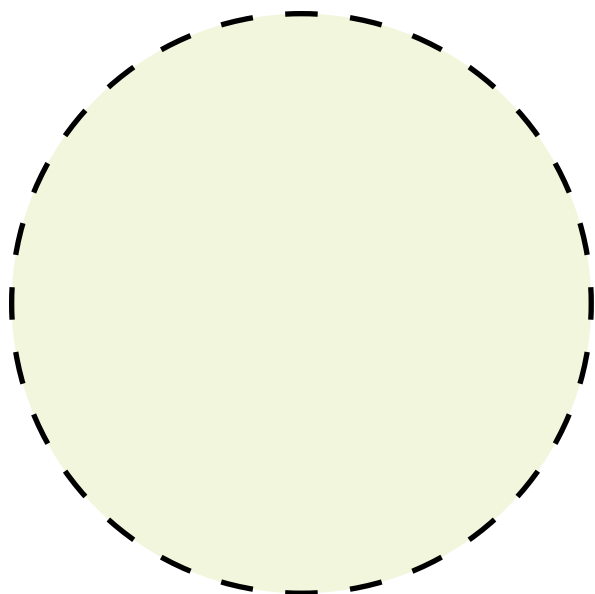
Can you guess what they found when they got here to America? That's right, pumpkins! Pumpkins are larger and easier to hollow out than turnips. An American tradition was born.



This Jack-o-lantern Is Shaping Up

Cut construction paper into these shapes to make a paper jack-o-lantern.

(Psst, here's a secret. Try overlapping these shapes to create new shapes.)

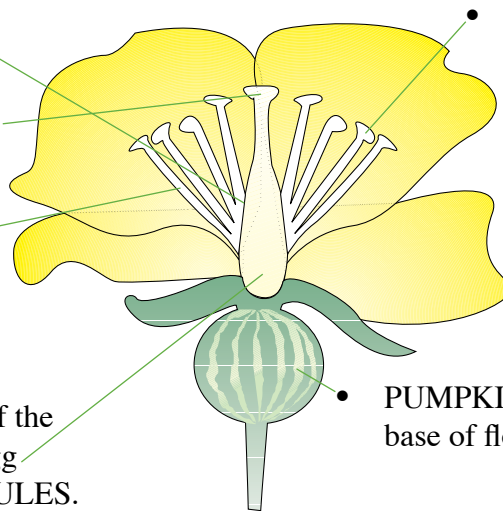


Pumpkins and Farming

Where Do Pumpkins Come From?

Did you know that pumpkins start to grow inside of flowers? Pumpkin plants have two type of flowers. One is a male flower and the other is a female flower (see illustration). If you cut a pumpkin flower in half, you would see many different parts.

- In the center of the flower is the **PISTIL**.
- The sticky part at the top of the pistil is the **STIGMA**.
- The parts of the flower around the pistil are the **STAMENS**.
- At the bottom of the pistil are tiny egg cells called **OVULES**.



Stamens make yellow powder called **POLLEN**.

PUMPKIN starts at base of flower.

Farmers Make New Kinds of Pumpkins

Sometimes pollen comes from a flower on a different pumpkin plant. This is called **CROSS-POLLINATION**. Cross-pollination can be harmful to some plants, but it is good for pumpkins. It can make them healthier and tastier.

Sometimes farmers cross-pollinate pumpkins on purpose to create a brand new kind of pumpkin. If a farmer takes pollen from a small yellow pumpkin and puts it on the flower of a large orange pumpkin, it might make a pumpkin that has seeds for a small orange pumpkin.

Different types of pumpkins are called **VARIETIES**. You probably see many varieties around Halloween. Some are small, colorful, and good for decorations. Some taste sweet and are good for pies. One variety is even white! It makes a neat ghost-looking jack-o-lantern.



This issue of Ag Mag has been provided by:



Answers to coloring activity: (2) Chicago IL, (4) Morton IL, (5) Bushnell IL

To learn more about Agriculture, visit us at www.agintheclassroom.org, or contact your county Farm Bureau® office or Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom, Illinois Farm Bureau®, 1701 Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, IL 61701.