

Read Me Educator's Guide To: I LOVE BLUEBERRIES!



I LOVE BLUEBERRIES!

Author: Shannon Anderson

Illustrator: Jaclyn Sinquett

Publisher : Feeding Minds Press

Length: 32 pages

Age level: 5-9

Interest level: Pre-K-4th

Genre: Children's Fiction/
Gardening Education

Topics:

Growing blueberries with hydroponics, friendship and collaboration, poetry and word play, healthy eating and nutrition, journaling, sketching, creative thinking, and collective goal setting.

Sponsored By:



A classroom project. Two new friends.
One homesick for Maine.
Both sharing a delicious mission:
Blueberries!

Synopsis:

When Margot moves from Maine, she misses her old home. It doesn't take long until she meets Jolie, a new friend right next door. Together, the girls discover that friendship grows stronger with every sketch, poem, and big idea they share!

Join the girls and their trusty pets Pip and Munchy, as they inspire their class to grow hydroponic blueberries in the classroom. Along the way, they discover that learning and working together to meet a collective goal is as sweet as the iconic wild blue fruit from Maine that makes everyone say, "I Love Blueberries!"

Inspire your students to make agricultural connections, learn about Maine wild blueberries, and nourish ideas from seed to sprout! Blending agricultural science with storytelling and a dash of Maine's wild blueberry, this tale reminds every young reader that friendship, imagination, knowledge, and shared dreams are the richest harvest of all.

Made possible through funding from the Maine Agriculture Specialty License Plate. Thank you to all who purchase this plate and support agricultural education for thousands of students annually.



Before You Read

Pre-reading suggestions

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions.

1. Sample focus questions:

What do plants need to grow and make our food?

Many students will say things like soil, sun, water, and bees. A great way to extend student thinking is by using prompts.

- **Where do plants get water?** - Rain
- **Where do plants get light?** - The sun
- **Why do plants need soil?** - Soil gives plants a place for their roots to hold on and provides nutrients that help them grow. Nutrients are like a plant's breakfast, and they help plants grow big and strong!
- **Who helps plants grow?** - nature, people, or both?
Both! Nature can do a lot of growing on its own, but farmers can help nature provide more food.

Where do you think blueberries come from before they reach the store?

Help students realize that the food we eat does not come from a store. A farmer had to grow it! Then, someone had to pick it, package it, and get it to store shelves.

Have you ever picked a fruit or a vegetable? What was it like?

As students tell you what they picked, prompt them by asking where they picked it.

2. Explore the book

Look at the title and the illustrations.

Look at the title of the book and the cover illustrations, and ask students what they think this book will likely be about. Have them list what they see in the illustrations and make predictions about the story. What information might they learn? What makes them think that?

3. Set a purpose for reading

Give students clues about what's important.

Sample script:

"Today, as we read *I Love Blueberries!*, let's look for two things — how the characters work together to solve problems, and how they learn about growing food in a new way. At the end of the book, we'll talk about what we can learn from them and how we can make connections to Maine agriculture."

Vocabulary

Grant- Money given that helps do something good

Hydroponics- Growing plants in water

Germinate- When a seed spouts

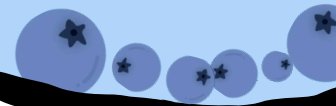
Superfood- A food extra rich in nutrients

Enthusiasm- Really excited, eager

Document- A paper with written information

Haiku and Cinquain - Poems that follow a special pattern - see activity

Transplant- Move a growing thing from one place to another



After You Read

Post-reading suggestions

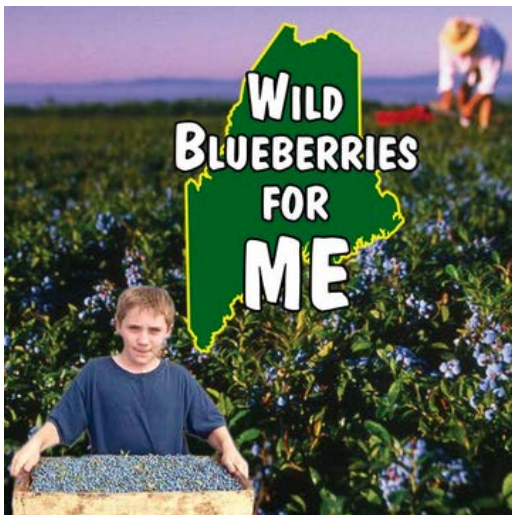
After reading the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Introduce the book *Wild Blueberries for ME* from Maine Agriculture in the Classroom. Digital copies of the book are free online at <https://teachmefoodandfarms.org/bberriesmebook/>.

1. Discussion Questions:

- What are the challenges Margot and Jolie face trying to grow blueberries in the classroom? How did they solve them?
- What is hydroponics?
- What did Margot and Jolie need to grow blueberries in the classroom?
- How is growing blueberries in nature different than growing them using hydroponics?
- How did Jolie help Margot feel better about moving to a new place?

2. Make Connections:

Encourage students to make real-world connections by discussing Maine wild blueberries. Use *Wild Blueberries for ME* as a springboard to discuss how wild blueberries grow, where they are found in Maine, and why they are called wild.



Download *Blueberries for ME* here! Want a physical book? Request one by emailing MAITC@Maine.gov



<https://teachmefoodandfarms.org/bberriesmebook/>

Wild Blueberry Lessons

Find these free downloadable lessons about wild blueberries on MAITC's Teach ME About Food & Farms website.

<https://teachmefoodandfarms.org/>

[Wild Blueberries for ME \(Pre-K-2\)](#)

[Wild Blueberries for ME \(3-5\)](#)

[Wild Blueberries & Animals \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberries - Advertising \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberries - Health & Nutrition \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberries - Producing Wild Blueberries \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberry Poetry \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberry History & Geography \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberry Math \(3-8\)](#)

[Wild Blueberry \(3-8\)](#)



Here are some questions students can answer after reading *Wild Blueberries for ME*.

- **What is different between Maine's wild blueberries and high bush blueberries?** The wild blueberry is smaller, sweeter, has a more intense flavor, and is less likely to burst when baking. Maine blueberries grow close to the ground, which is why they are called low-bush blueberries.
- **Where in the world do wild blueberries grow?** Wild, low-bush blueberries grow naturally in the northeastern United States, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada, but almost all managed fields are located in Maine and eastern Canada. (See book page 4)
- **How do wild blueberries grow?** Wild blueberries grow in rocky, acidic soil called barrens. They spread through underground stems called rhizomes, forming low, dense patches that return year after year. (See book page 17)
- **Why are they called wild?** Farmers manage wild blueberry fields rather than plant them. They care for naturally occurring plants by pruning the fields every other year to encourage new growth and control weeds. (See book page 13)

PLANT SCIENCE

Farming in a Glove



How do Seeds Spout? **Hands-On Growing Activity**

Description: Grow your own farm in a glove! This activity allows for students to plant five different seeds in the fingers of a food glove. Given a few days and some water, the glove will be alive with growing sprouts- baby plants that your students can observe. This is an excellent activity for teaching plant growth and genetic differences.

Materials:

- 5 different seeds per student
- Clear plastic gloves (1 per student)
- Cotton balls (5 per student)
- Permanent Marker
- Tape
- Water in a bowl
- Journal



Alignments and connecting standards:

Science: K-LS1, 1-LS3-1, 2-LS2-1, 3-LS-1, 3-LS3-1, 3-LS3-2

ELA: L.3, L.6

Looking for more resources related to "Farming in a Glove?" Check them out here:



<https://agclassroom.org/matrix/lessons/831/>



Download printables, activities, and extension lessons here.



How to Grow Seeds in a Glove!

Directions:

- Begin by writing the different seed names on each finger of the glove. Write the student's name on the palm of the glove
- Immerse a cotton ball in water. The cotton ball should be saturated but not dripping.
- While you have the moist cotton ball in your hand, place one or two seeds onto the cotton ball.
- Place the "seeded" cotton ball into the correctly labeled finger. Do the same for each of the five seed types.
- Fold down the opening of the glove, securing it with tape. Display the gloves by hanging, fingers facing downward, on a classroom bulletin board. There is no need to water; the cotton balls contain enough water to germinate the seeds. Most seeds will sprout within a week. Some seeds take up to two weeks, such as: lettuce, cabbage, and peppers.
- Compare the varying germination times and seedling types. Documenting seed growth can be very exciting for students. Create a seed journal!
- As an extension activity, when roots and shoots emerge, cut off the finger of the glove, remove seeding and cotton ball, and transplant into a pot of soil.



Journaling Activity:

Journaling is a great way to document seed germination! Create a seed journal to study the seeds on day one and record their size, color, and shape. Use age appropriate, agriculturally accurate vocabulary to describe the seeds and seedlings. Have students sketch what they see, write observations, and note questions that come up. By the end, they'll have a detailed record of how their plants grew from seed to seedling.

Wild Maine Blueberries



How do wild blueberries grow?

Wild Maine blueberries don't commonly grow from seeds, instead they spread through underground rhizomes that produce new shoots called clones. These clones form large, connected, wild blueberry fields. The proof is in the patchwork of colors across a blueberry barren—each slightly different shade of blue represents a unique clone that began long ago from a single seed. Although growing from seed takes much longer, wild blueberries can be grown this way. Let's try!

Directions:

Extracting blueberry seeds: To extract blueberry seeds, mash some frozen blueberries in warm water. Let the mixture sit for a minute so the seeds settle, then pour off the pulp. Rinse with fresh water a few times until only clean seeds remain. Drain them well and spread them on a paper plate to dry.

To plant the seeds: Sprinkle the seeds on a 3-inch bed of moist sphagnum moss and cover with a very thin layer of moss. Keep the moss damp but not soggy, cover the container with a newspaper, and place it in a warm spot (60–70°F). Germination takes about a month. Once tiny seedlings appear, remove the newspaper and move the container to a sunny window.

To transplant blueberry plants: Wait until the seedlings reach 2–3 inches tall. Gently lift each one, keeping the roots intact, and repot into small containers filled with equal parts peat, sand, and soil. Water well and keep the young plants in a sunny location.

Tasty Recipes

This activity is adapted from: Abdalla, D. A. University of Maine Cooperative Extension*

Blueberry Muffins

Ingredients:

- ½ cup butter or vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ cup milk
- 2 cups wild blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- 2 tbs. coarse sugar (can use regular)

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 375
Cream the butter or oil and the sugar in a bowl, reserving the coarse sugar for later.

Add eggs and mix.

Mix in dry ingredients, vanilla, and milk. Lastly, gently mix in blueberries.

Scoop mix into paper muffin cups and sprinkle the tops with sugar.

Bake 25-30 minutes

Makes 12

Wild Blueberry Smoothie

Ingredients:

- 6 oz. wild blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- 6 oz. yogurt (plain, blueberry, or vanilla)
- 1 tablespoon of honey (optional)
- ½ cup ice

Preparation:

Place ingredients in blender, cover, and blend well at high speed. Serve immediately.

Serves 2



Want MAITC News?

Join our newsletter!

Email:

MAITC@Maine.gov

SIGN UP!

*Abdalla, D. A. (1967, February 23). Growing blueberries from seed. University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. (1967, February 23). Growing blueberries from seed. University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. <https://extension.umaine.edu/blueberries/resources/home-garden/growing-blueberries-from-seed/>

Wild Blueberry Word Gardens

Create Word Fun!



Activity

Haiku and Cinquain Poetry

Teach students to write blueberry-themed poetry!

Use the Haiku and Cinquain Poetry graphic organizers to guide students through each line step-by-step, prompting them to choose descriptive words, actions, and feelings related to blueberries. Once finished, have them read their poems aloud and/or make a poetry display!



Haiku

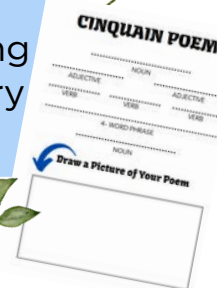
The Harvest

Blueberry picker
Raking blueberry barrens
Summertime in Maine.

Cinquain

Blueberries

Small, sweet
Raking, harvesting, gathering
Summer flavor in every berry
Wild!

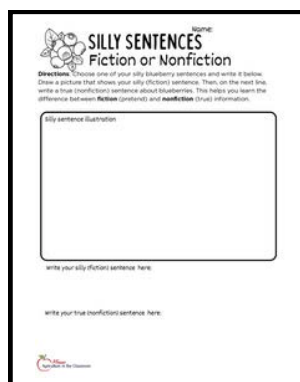
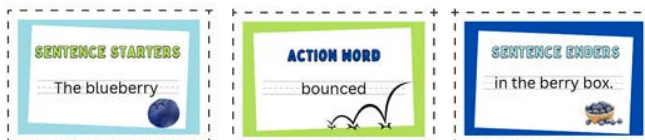


Activity

Silly Sentences

Teach students about wild Maine blueberries by reading

Wild Blueberries for ME from Maine Agriculture in the classroom. Then, have students construct blueberry sentences using the **Silly Sentences Cards**. Complete the activity by having students fill out the **Silly Sentences Worksheet** to teach them about illustration, fiction, and nonfiction. For more activities, check out all the other resources with *Blueberries for ME!*



Are You Looking

for more ag activities? Find lessons, activities, and resources on Maine Agriculture in the Classroom's lesson site Teach ME About Food & Farms <https://teachmefoodandfarms.org>

<https://teachmefoodandfarms.org/lberriesmebook/>



Extended Learning Lessons

From Maine Agriculture in the Classroom



Find ag accurate, searchable, free lesson databases here:

MAITC's Lesson Site **Teach ME**
About Food & Farms
Agriculture Lessons
for Grades PreK-12
<https://teachmefoodandfarms.org>

Buzzy, Buzzy Bee: (Grades 2-7)

Students play a game in which they pretend to be honeybees and apple trees (or blueberry plants). In the process, they learn about plant pollination.

The Incredible Edible Soil: (Grades 2-5)

Soil is the foundation of our whole food system, but is often cast aside as "just dirt." This hands-on lesson allows students to explore the composition of soil, look at different soil samples, and then build their own edible "soil."

Seed Germination Competition:
(Grades PreK-6) Students will sprout seeds in different conditions to learn how seeds germinate.

Taste Testing (Grades 3-4):
Build awareness of where food comes from and encourage children to eat healthier, locally grown foods.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: **(Grade 2-5)**

Use this lesson to teach students about the important roles insects play in our world and how to distinguish between insects that are harmful or helpful.

Seed Surprises: (Grades Prek-3)
By sorting and planting seeds, students discover that seeds come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors and produce plants.

Ag in the Classroom
National Matrix
National
Agriculture in the Classroom
<https://agclassroom.org/matrix>

Bunches of Berries: (Grades 3-5)

Students investigate a variety of berries, discover how and where they are grown, and explore their nutritional benefits.

Seeds Miraculous Seeds: (Grades 3,5)

Students dissect seeds, identify the anatomy and function of seed parts, and classify seeds as monocots or dicots.

Supreme Seeds: (Grades Pre-K-2)
Students observe various types of seed, discover the many uses of seeds, taste edible seeds, and make a seed mosaic.

The Amazing Honey Bee:
(Grades Pre-K-2)
Students investigate the three types of honey bees in a colony, identify their roles, and recognize honey bees as part of a community that works together.

Honey Bees: A Pollination Simulation: **(Grades 3-5)**

Students identify the parts of a honey bee, the stages of its life cycle, and its role in pollination.

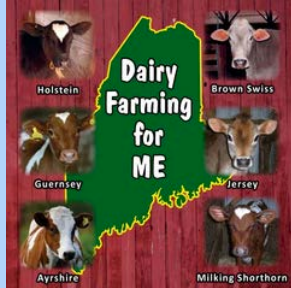
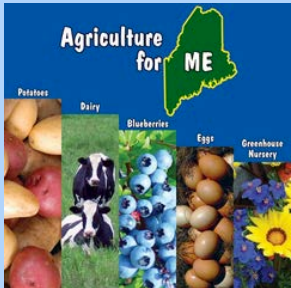
Soil Formation and Edible Horizons: **(Grades 3-5)**

Students discover what a soil profile looks like, investigate the composition of soil, and explore the five soil-forming factors and soil horizons.





Funding from this Specialty License plate has helped create six books in the "Agriculture for ME" series. All books are available online for your smart board, tablet, or computer at www.teachmefoodandfarms.org/resources. There you will find ACTIVITY SHEETS and LESSONS for each book. Teachers or other educators may request one free physical copy of the series by emailing MAITC@Maine.gov.



Answering Your Questions

How can I find local farms or farmers who might visit our class or host a field trip?

At www.realmaine.com you can find a full searchable listing of farms, fairs, and farmers' markets.

How can I find funding for agricultural projects and field trips for my classroom?

There are one-year grants for Ag Leadership, Ag Awareness, and School Gardens and Greenhouses on our website. Since 2008, we have awarded \$60,000 annually thanks to the agriculture specialty license plate. Check the website for details.

www.MaineAgintheClassroom.org/grants

How can I find information on school gardens?

MAITC works closely with the Maine School Garden Network to provide workshops, information, and mentors for school gardens. Check their website www.msgn.org for more information. We suggest joining their newsletter and attending Maine School Garden Day this spring!

Does Maine Ag in the Classroom provide teacher training?

MAITC offers teacher professional development workshops throughout the year, including a week-long Summer Teachers Institute during which curriculum resources are distributed and 6-38 contact hours or University of Maine CEUs are awarded.

How can I connect agriculture to my classroom curriculum?

Lessons and activities on our lessons website and the National Ag in the Classroom curriculum matrix are aligned to state and national standards. Check our website for free, downloadable lessons and resources. Monthly updates are sent through our E-newsletter.

Sign up by emailing MAITC@Maine.gov



Maine
Agriculture in the Classroom

28 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

(207) 287-5522

Maitc@Maine.gov

www.MaineAgintheClassroom.org



To continue our Read ME Program, we need your input! Please fill out our online evaluation.



<https://tinyurl.com/khxr38b>