

Lesson: Before the Berries—Maine's Glacial Past

Grade Level: 6-9

Time: 80-90 minutes

Essential Question

How did glaciers help create the perfect home for Maine's wild blueberries?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how glaciers change the landscape.
- Describe glacial till, glacial outwash, striations, erratics, and moraines.
- Explain why Maine's blueberry barrens formed where they did.
- Explain how geology influences agriculture.

Extension Activities

- [Soil and Sustainability Lesson](#) - National Agriculture in the Classroom
- [Soil / Water Interactive Maps](#) - National Agriculture in the Classroom
- [Wild Blueberries for ME](#) - Maine Agriculture in the Classroom

Materials

- Reading: [Before the Berries: Maine's Glacial Past](#)
- Handouts: [Compare/Contrast](#), [Glacial Vocabulary](#)

Background

About 25,000 years ago, a massive glacier covered Maine. As the glacier slowly moved across the land, it scraped the bedrock, carried rocks and soil, and reshaped the landscape. When the glacier melted, it left behind rocky blueberry barrens, glacial till, glacial outwash, moraines, and glacial erratic boulders. Today, these unique landforms provide the acidic, well-drained soils that wild blueberries need to grow.

Procedure

1. Engage (5-10 minutes)

- Ask students:

Why do you think wild blueberries grow so well in Maine?

- Show a photograph of a Maine wild blueberry barren.
- Have students record observations and share what they notice.
- Introduce the lesson's essential question.

2. Explore (30-40 minutes)

- Read *Before the Berries: Maine's Glacial Past* as a class or independently.
- As students read, have them highlight or underline glacial vocabulary words.
- Explore the [Maine Ice Age Trail](#) website
- Discuss how glaciers changed Maine's landscape.

3. Explain (20 minutes)

- Complete the Glacial Vocabulary handout.
- Review each vocabulary word and have students identify examples.
- Discuss how glacial landforms created the conditions needed for wild blueberry barrens.

4. Elaborate (10–15 minutes)

- Complete the Compare and Contrast handout.
- Compare a garden landscape with a wild blueberry barren.
- Discuss why blueberries thrive in one environment but not the other.

5. Evaluate (5–10 minutes)

Have students answer the following exit question:

How did glaciers help create the perfect home for Maine's wild blueberries? Use at least three glacial vocabulary words in your answer.

Maine Learning Results

- **Science:** MS-ESS2-1, MS-ESS3-1
- **Social Studies:** Geography A.1
- **ELA:** R.1, R.2, R.7, R.11, W.2, SL.1

