



Welcome!

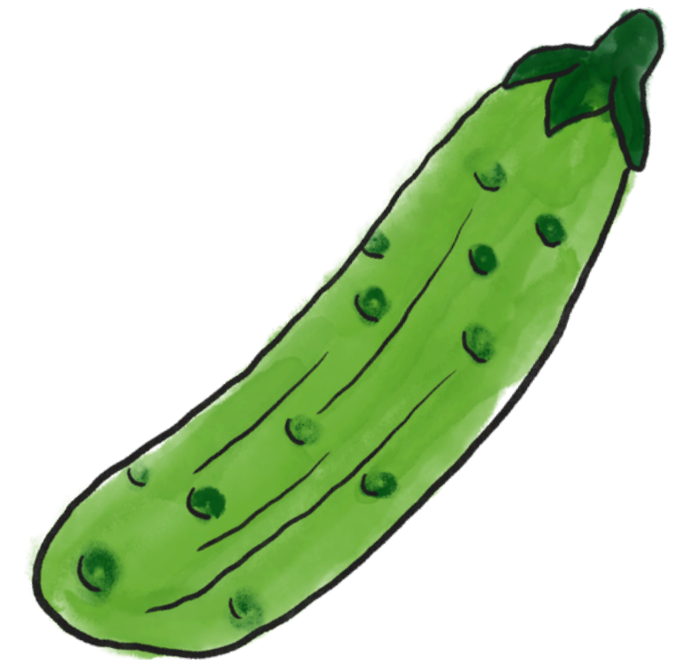
Introduction to Agriculture

Week 1

Week 1: Introduction to Agriculture

Program Focus:

- Learn what agriculture is and how it is part of our everyday lives.
- Discover how seeds grow into plants that provide food, clothing, and other resources.
- Explore what plants need to grow: sunlight, water, air, and soil.
- Understand how farmers care for crops and animals to help feed our communities.



Cucumbers are an important specialty crop in West Virginia and are actually a fruit related to melons. They are about 95% water, which helps keep you hydrated.



Book of the Week:

It all Starts With a Seed By: Emily Bone

It All Starts With a Seed by Emily Bone explains how many of the foods we eat begin as seeds and grow into fruits, vegetables, and grains. The book also shows how seeds sprout, how plants grow, and how bees help flowers through pollination, using colorful illustrations to help children understand where food comes from.





Story Discussion

- What kinds of plants did you see in the book?
- What do seeds need to grow?
- How do seeds travel to new places?
- Why do you think seeds are important for our food and nature?

What is Agriculture?

Agriculture is the practice of growing plants and raising animals to produce many of the things we use every day.

Key Aspects of Agriculture:

- Growing food like fruits, vegetables, grains, milk, eggs, and meat.
- Providing materials like cotton and wool for clothing and other products.
- Supporting communities by creating jobs and helping farmers earn a living.
- Being an important part of life, providing food and resources for people around the world.



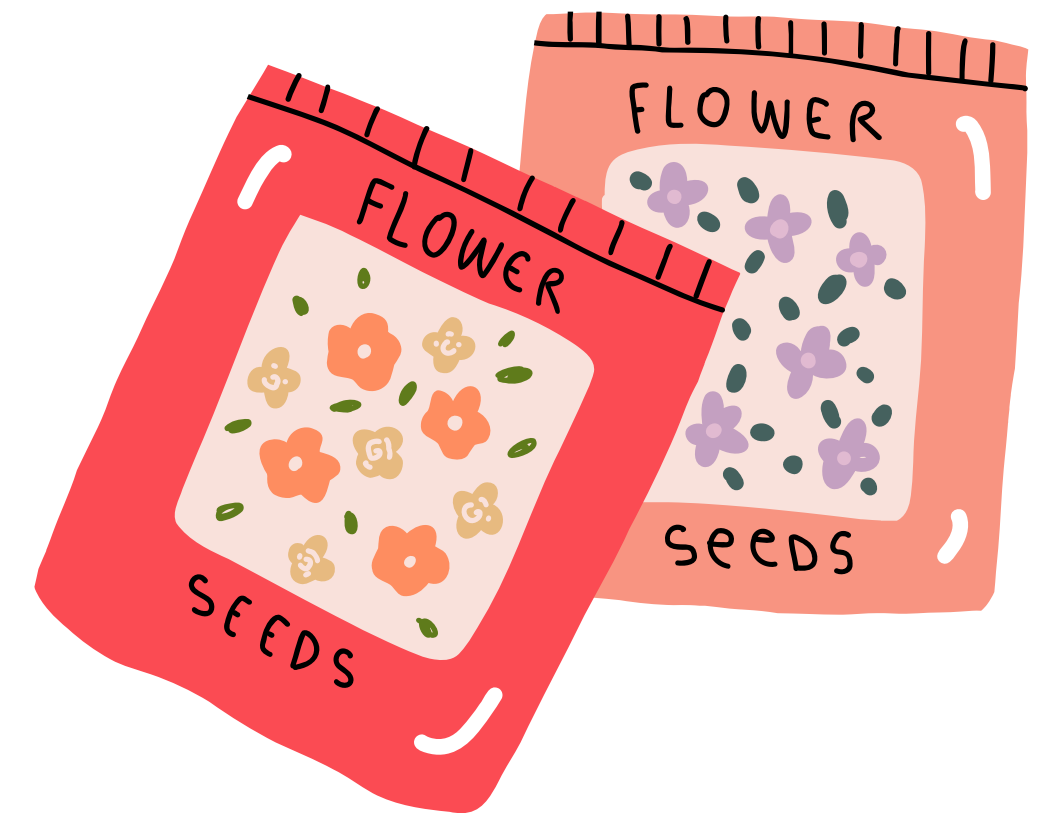
Cauliflower is a cool-season specialty crop that farmers sometimes cover with its own leaves to keep the head white. This process, called blanching, protects it from sunlight that can turn it yellow or green.

Seeds: The Beginning of Life

Every plant begins as a tiny seed with a baby plant inside waiting to grow. Seeds need a few important things:

- Sunlight for energy.
- Water to start growing.
- Soil for nutrients.
- Air to breathe.

When seeds get what they need, they sprout roots to find water and shoots to reach sunlight. As the plant grows, its leaves use sunlight to make food, and over time it can produce flowers, fruits, vegetables, or even more seeds.



West Virginia has a history of saving and sharing heirloom seeds like the “Wild Goose bean,” a local variety said to have been found in a goose.

Farmers: Nature's Caregivers

Farmers help plants and animals grow strong and healthy.
Farmers work hard to:

- Plant and care for crops.
- Feed and protect animals.
- Watch the weather and soil.
- Harvest food when it is ready.

Farmers help ensure we have fresh, healthy food all year long.



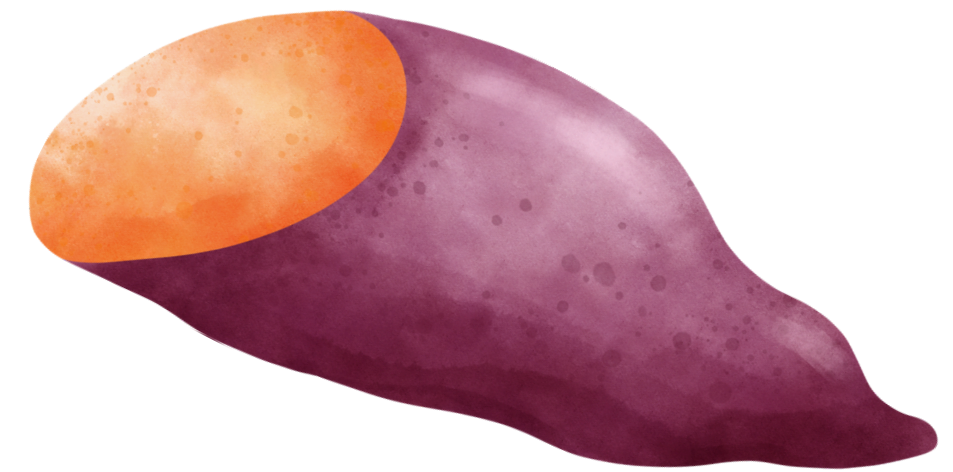
In West Virginia, 95–98% of farms are family-owned. These farms are often smaller and many of them raise cattle and chickens, helping provide food for people across the state.



Week 1 Activity: Seed Planting

Activity Focus:

- Plant your own seed in a cup or pot using soil, water, and care.
- Learn planting tips and understand what plants need to grow: sunlight, water, air, and soil.
- Explore how caring for plants connects to growing food, flowers, and herbs at home or in your community.
- Discuss the importance of agriculture, including sustainability, healthy eating, and sharing crops with others.



Sweet potatoes are a specialty crop and are not like regular potatoes; they're storage roots that love warm soil and sunshine, so farmers in West Virginia use special beds to help them grow.

Connecting Specialty Crops to Agriculture

- Grown for unique flavors, colors, or uses and provide food, culture, and community.
- Include fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers grown for taste, nutrition, or local traditions.
- Support local farmers and communities with high-value crops and teach about plant care and sustainability.
- Connect us to history and culture, like heirloom beans, apples, and regional vegetables.

Reflection Questions:

- What is your favorite specialty crop, and why?
- How do specialty crops help farmers and local communities?
- What can you do at home or in your community to support specialty crops?
- How do specialty crops connect us to history and culture?