

Specialty Crops in West Virginia

LEARNING RECAP

- Specialty crops in West Virginia **help family farms grow, provide healthy and tasty foods, and connect farmers with their communities.**
- Specialty crops make West Virginia food **tasty and unique** because they are **fresh, picked locally, and have flavors you can't find anywhere else.**
- Farming specialty crops is important in West Virginia because it **helps farmers access niche markets, diversifies the state's agriculture, and strengthens local food systems and the overall economy.**

AT HOME ACTIVITIES

WV Specialty Crop Grow-It Challenge:

- Plant a small specialty crop common in WV (tomatoes, peppers, herbs, or lettuce) in a pot or container.
- Observe growth weekly and record changes in height, leaves, and color.

From Farm to Table Map:

- Choose one WV specialty crop and draw its journey from farm to home. Include where it's grown in WV, how it's transported, and how it's used or eaten.

Specialty Crop Taste Test:

- Try 3–4 WV specialty crops (apples, berries, tomatoes, herbs). Compare taste, texture, and smell, then rank favorites and identify one health benefit for each.

FUN FACTS

- West Virginia grows over 1,000 types of apples, and thousands of acres in the state are apple orchards.
- WV farmers grow berries like blueberries and blackberries on hundreds of acres, especially in mountain areas.
- More than 2,500 farms in West Virginia grow specialty crops like fruits, vegetables, and herbs.
- Fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops help bring in over \$200 million to West Virginia's farm economy.