



Welcome!

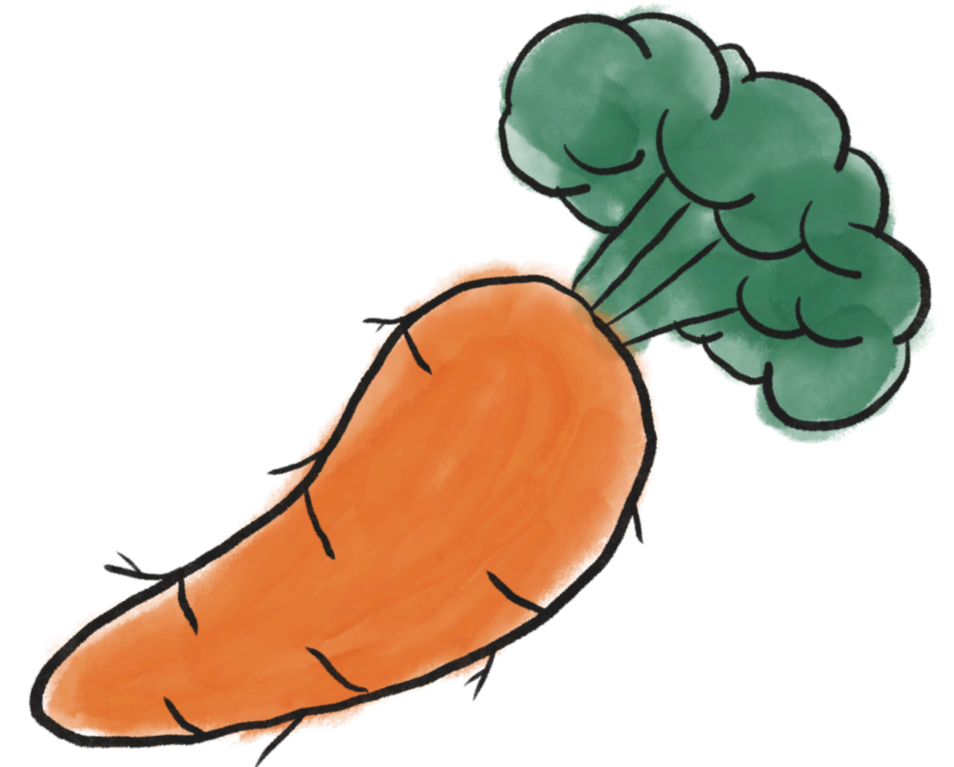
Exploring Specialty Crops

Week 2

Week 2: Exploring Specialty Crops

Program Focus:

- Learn what specialty crops are and how they grow from seeds into foods like fruits, vegetables, and herbs.
- Discover how food travels from farms to farmers' markets, where people can buy fresh, local products.
- Explore how farmers grow, harvest, and sell crops while supporting their communities.
- Understand how visiting farmers' markets and trying new foods helps support local farmers and healthy eating.



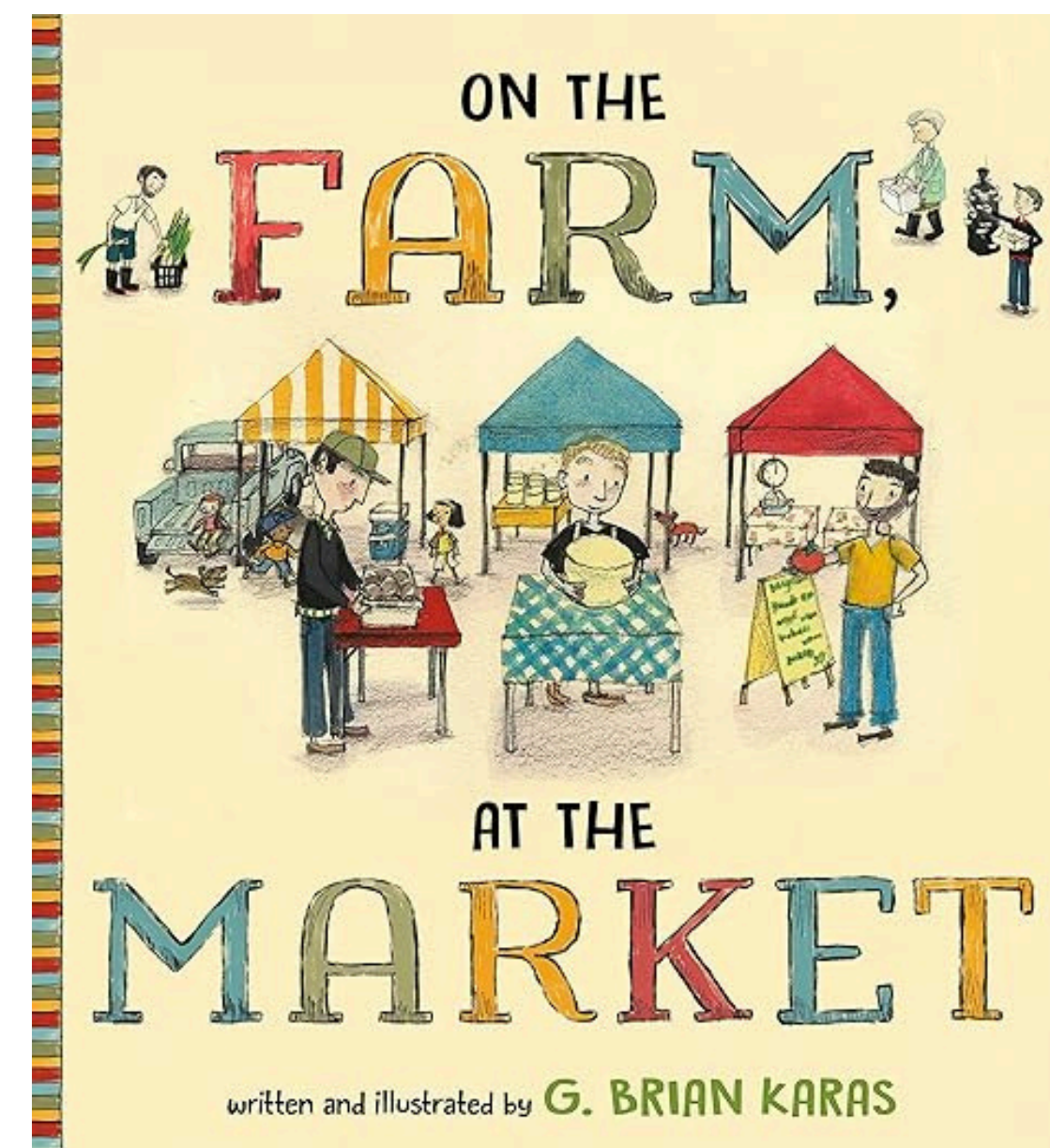
Carrots are a specialty crop that can grow well in the cool soil of West Virginia. After a few frosty nights, they actually taste sweeter, making them a tasty harvest even in cold weather.



Book of the Week:

On the Farm, at the Market By: G. Brian Karas

On the Farm, At the Market explains how food travels from farms to markets, where people can buy fresh products like vegetables, eggs, and cheese. The book shows how farmers and community members work together to grow, prepare, and share food, helping children understand how local farms connect to the meals we enjoy every day.





Story Discussion

- What kinds of foods did the farmers grow or collect on the farm?
- What happened to the food after it was harvested from the farm?
- Why are farmers markets important for communities?
- How do farmers and workers work together to bring food from the farm to our tables?

What is a Farmers Market?

- A farmers market is a place where farmers sell fresh food directly to people.
- Farmers bring crops they grow on their farms, like fruits, vegetables, honey, and flowers.
- Farmers markets help communities buy fresh, local, and seasonal foods.
- Visiting a farmers market helps support local farmers and small businesses



In West Virginia, farmers markets can take many forms, including traditional, online, consignment, on-farm, roadside stands, and mobile markets.

What is a Specialty Crop?

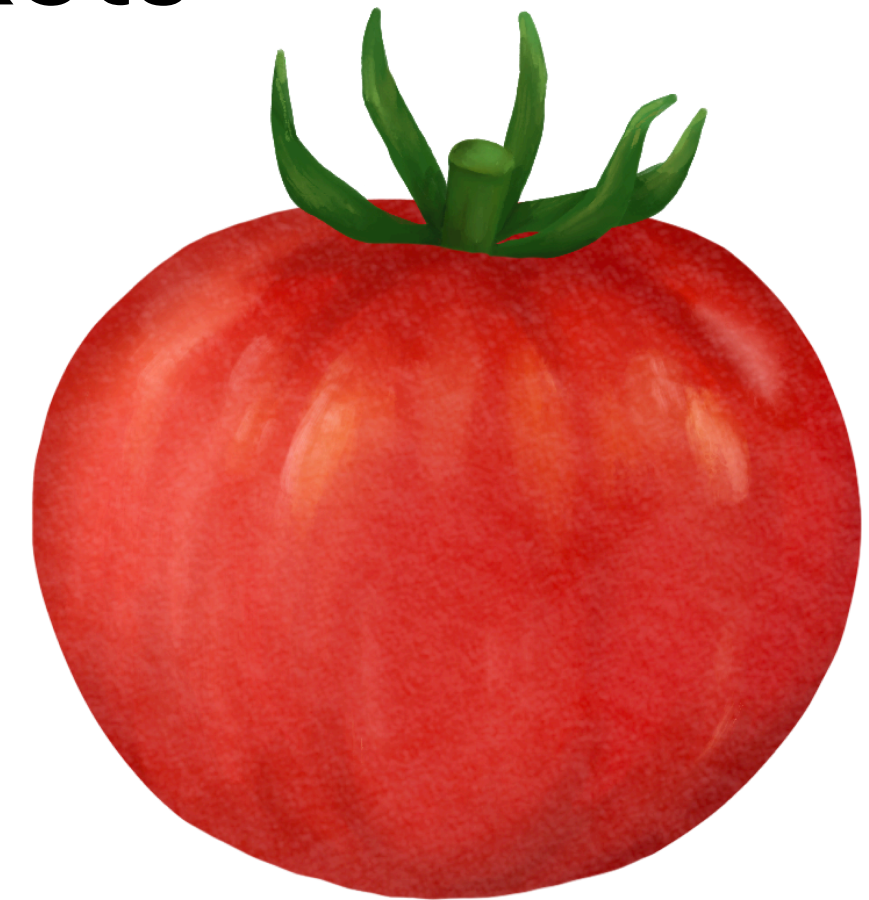
- Specialty crops are fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, and nuts grown for their flavor, nutrition, and variety.
- They often include local or unique foods like apples, tomatoes, peppers, berries, and herbs.
- Many specialty crops are sold at farmers markets, roadside stands, and local stores.
- These crops help farmers grow fresh, healthy foods for their communities.



The Golden Delicious apple is a specialty crop and the official state fruit of West Virginia. It was discovered by a farmer in the early 1900s when a special apple tree grew from a seed.

Nutritional Value of Specialty Crops at WV Farmers Markets

- Specialty crops like fresh fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals your body needs to stay healthy.
- Eating colorful crops such as tomatoes, peppers, leafy greens, berries, and squash gives you vitamin C, vitamin A, fiber, and antioxidants.
- Local foods travel less from farm to market, so they stay fresher and more nutritious.
- Buying and eating local specialty crops from farmers markets helps your body get fresh, tasty, and nutrient-rich foods straight from the farm.

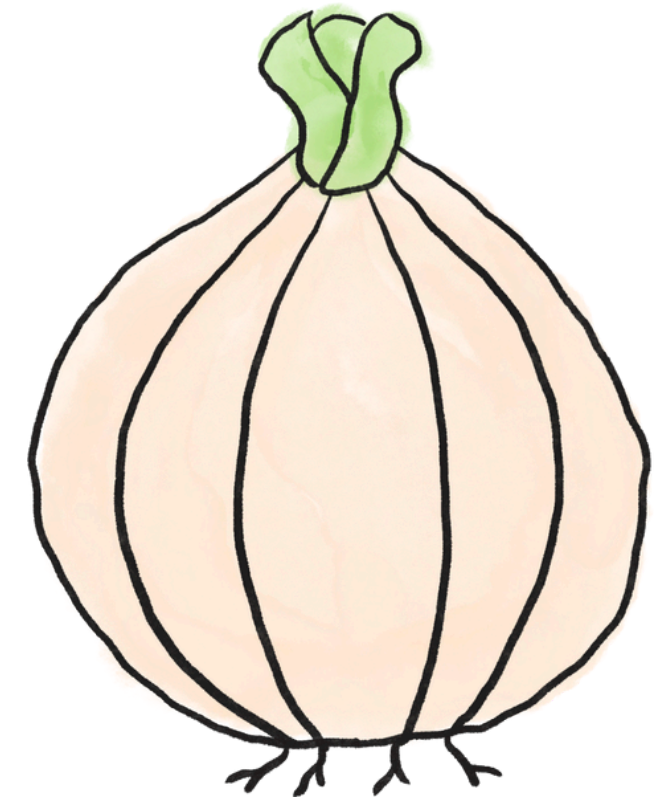


In West Virginia, tomatoes are an important specialty crop. They love warm, sunny weather and are full of vitamins and minerals!

Week 2 Activity: Farmers Market Role-Play

Activity Focus:

- Set up a pretend farmers market with fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops.
- Use play money to practice buying and selling foods.
- Take turns being farmers (vendors) and customers to learn how markets work.
- Explore how farmers markets connect farmers, food, and communities while supporting local agriculture.



Hardneck garlic is a specialty crop in West Virginia. Varieties like Music, German White, and Georgian Fire are cold-hardy and flavorful, while Idaho Silverskin stores well and Elephant garlic has giant, mild cloves.

Connecting Specialty Crops to Farmers Markets

- Specialty crops grown in West Virginia provide fresh, local food and connect farms to communities.
- Visiting farmers markets helps us learn about different crops, nutrition, and local traditions.
- Supporting local farmers strengthens communities and promotes sustainable agriculture.
- Understanding how food grows from seeds to the market helps us connect to agriculture and enjoy healthy, fresh foods.

Reflection Questions:

- What is your favorite specialty crop you learned about today, and why?
- How do farmers markets help communities and local farmers in West Virginia?
- What did you learn about how specialty crops grow from seeds to the foods we eat?
- How can you support local farmers or try new foods at a farmers market?