

CREAM OF THE CROP

A Harvest of Ideas for Educators

Fantastic Fact:

California is a top producer of citrus fruit in the United States.



Congratulations to the 2023-2024 *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest Regional Winners.

Find a full listing of the regional-winning student authors [HERE!](#)

Stay tuned! State winners will be announced on January 1 on our website and social media channels.



LearnAboutAg®

It's Beginning to Look a lot like Citrus...

Talk about timing.

December is citrus season in California and orchards are full of Mother Nature's ornaments (in the form of oranges, mandarins,

grapefruits, lemons, and more).

Bring ag into your classroom with our various citrus-related resources, below.

[Citrus Fact Sheet](#)

[Orange you Glad We have Farmland? poster](#)

[Farm to School Citrus Resources](#)

ORANGE
you glad we have
FARMLAND?

LEARNING WHERE OUR FOOD AND FIBER COMES FROM IS AN IMPORTANT LESSON IN LIFE.

Learn how much land is used to grow food for the world's population

What percentage of the land do you think it takes to grow all of the food that we need to feed the world?

IMAGINE THE EARTH AS AN ORANGE...

- Approximately 75% of the earth is covered in water.
- 22% of the earth is deserts, swamps, mountains, polar regions, or land that is too rocky, wet, or hot to grow food.
- This 3% of the earth is acceptable for farming and represents what humans depend on for growing food.

3% Available Farmland

Knowing the importance of keeping farmland healthy by participating in wildlife recreation.

FARM FRESH Citrus

ALL CITRUS FRUITS ARE RICH IN VITAMIN C. IN FACT, ONE MEDIUM ORANGE OR GRAPEFRUIT PROVIDES 100% OF YOUR DAILY VITAMIN C NEEDS.

Community Fact Sheet
Citrus Fruits
Information compiled by Runkle-Gonzalez

How Produced - Citrus trees are propagated asexually, a cross between a seedling and a lemon, and are sold through a proprietary system. Quality control is maintained through the use of the same genetic material as the parent plant. Citrus trees are propagated by grafting onto a rootstock. The rootstock is chosen for its ability to resist diseases and pests. Citrus trees are propagated by grafting onto a rootstock. The rootstock is chosen for its ability to resist diseases and pests. Citrus trees are propagated by grafting onto a rootstock. The rootstock is chosen for its ability to resist diseases and pests.

Commercially Major - California is the leading producer of fresh citrus products for consumption and export and is followed by Florida. Other major citrus-producing states include Arizona, Texas, and Washington. Other countries that produce citrus include Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and South Africa.

Top Producing Countries - Most of the world's fresh citrus products are produced in California and Arizona. The state of California is responsible for the growth of the citrus industry in California. Other major citrus-producing countries include Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and South Africa.

Teacher Feature



Kevin Jordan Outstanding Educator of the Year

Grades Taught: 7th-12th grade
School: Leo A. Palmiter Junior/Senior High School
County: Sacramento

Let's start with the basics: What is your favorite California commodity?

There are so many wonderful commodities in California. I love hitting up my local farmer's markets in search of yummy treats. Some of my favorites are fresh tomatoes, strawberries, mandarins, and grapes. My list of favorite California commodities gets bigger with each passing year!

How and when did you first learn about Ag in the Classroom?

When I first started teaching, I was desperate to find dynamic ways to bring plants and growing into the classroom. Thankfully a colleague informed me of Ag in the Classroom, and I quickly realized there was an amazing opportunity for me to learn from and connect with people who share the same passion.

How long have you been teaching students about agriculture?

I have been teaching students about agriculture for the past 14 years.

What is your favorite AITC program, resource, or event, and why?

I am fortunate to have attended multiple AITC Conferences, incredible catalysts for my program to improve and evolve. I always return to my school inspired, informed, and invigorated to connect my students with agriculture in new and exciting ways.

Perhaps one of the greatest resources is the connections and professional relationships that develop during these conferences. The sharing of project ideas, lessons, and best practices creates a raging torrent of endless possibilities for positive change.

Additionally, LearnAboutAg.org provides a wealth of information and support that can be utilized by anyone with an internet connection.

Describe an agriculture-based project you have been involved with lately.

I am a Career and Technical Education Horticulture teacher, which allows me to work on agriculture-based projects every day. Some of our current projects include removing turf grass and planting water-wise pollinator gardens, organic fruit and vegetable cultivation in our school garden and orchard, composting with worms, aquaponic plant cultivation, houseplant and succulent propagation, and much more.

Do you have any advice for other teachers on how to implement agriculture in their classrooms?

Implementing agriculture into our classrooms is not difficult at all and I would argue that learning about agriculture is essential. What's amazing is that mathematics, history, science, reading, writing, art, and more can all be explored and dynamically interwoven together when we bring agriculture into our classrooms.

In my experience, when learning about agriculture the students become figuratively and literally hungry for more. If you want to bring ag into your classroom, don't do it alone. Try to bring along as many colleagues and administrators as possible. Last spring, I helped a 5th-grade teacher at a neighboring school create a small garden outside her classroom for her students to get their hands dirty while learning about agriculture. It was such a booming success for the students and staff that now every classroom at the school has its unique garden to tend to. The campus is now filled with flowers and food, and the students are filled with joy, knowledge, and school pride. The transformation was swift and incredible to witness.

Any "ag-ha" moments in your classroom? Where agriculture came alive for your students?

Hands-on learning in our school garden has a profound impact on my students

regardless of their current academic abilities. I knew I was on to something special when students who were struggling academically, emotionally, and behaviorally were soon discovering a bounty of success when performing hands-on work in the garden and classroom. Other staff members would comment, "I wish he would be like that in my classroom." To see students who were struggling in other courses suddenly find great levels of academic success was an incredible eye-opener into the transformative nature of bringing agriculture into the classroom.

BE OR NOMINATE A TEACHER FEATURE: EMAIL US HERE!

Featured Resource

Calling All Foodies!

How did that ice cream get from cow to carton?

Farm Bureau Foodies will tell you. Produced by the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, this video series recognizes regional restaurants or food producers and the farmers behind the ingredients that make up some of our favorite foods!



WATCH

Grant Feature



2024 USDA Farm-to-School Grant Program

The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program is designed to increase the availability

of local foods in schools and help connect students to the sources of their food through education, taste tests, school gardens, field trips, and local food sourcing for school meals. Grants can launch new farm-to-school programs or expand existing efforts.

Eligible applicants may include schools and other institutions that operate child nutrition programs, tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural

producers, nonprofit entities, and state and local agencies.

Grant application deadline is January 12, 2024

LEARN MORE



Community Events

[California Kindergarten Conference](#)

January 12-14, 2024

The 2024 CA Kindergarten Conference in Santa Clara, CA.

AITC will be presenting "Life on the Farm: Incorporating Agriculture into Early Childhood Classrooms" on Saturday, January 13 from 3:30 to 4:45. Find more information [HERE](#).

[The National Association of Conservation Districts](#) ["May the Forest Be With You Always"](#)

The National Association of Conservation Districts is offering free educational materials to promote forest health. Their website currently lists three materials: an education guide, PowerPoint, and an activity journal for K-2 students! Order free resources [HERE](#).

[Pollinator Partnership](#)

Pollinator Partnership is launching the [2024 Pollinator Steward Certification](#) and the newly restructured [Bee Friendly Gardening Program](#).

[Food and Agriculture Center For Science Education](#)

The Food and Agriculture Center for Science Education provides learning materials that are in alignment with contemporary STEM standards; materials that spark inspiration. More information [HERE](#).

[Purple Plow Challenge](#)

Online

Students can help conserve natural resources locally and protect local ecosystems by addressing current and historical problems associated with the erosion of topsoil that limits the ability to grow food. After thoughtful research to evaluate how these challenges exist locally and globally, students will design, test, and demonstrate a solution that reduces topsoil erosion for their unique location or situation to help conserve

productive soil. The final product will be a model which demonstrates a measurable reduction in soil erosion. More information [HERE.](#)



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Help us continue providing FREE programs and materials that create an awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students.

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