

The Apple Tree

Grade Level: 3

Approximate Length of Activity: One class period

Objective

Teacher

1. Discuss apple production.
2. Challenge students to recall the sequence of the growth stages through listening.

Students

1. Learn about the steps of apple production and organize the steps in order.
2. Organize the growth stages in the order that they occur.

Michigan Content Standards: (Language Arts) R.CM.03.02; R.IT.03.02

Background

The proud apple tree stands straight and tall. He is five years old now. He feels pretty important because he is big enough to grow some nice, big, red, juicy apples. Winter is over. Farmer Ed has pruned out his branches that aren't needed. Pruning lets the sun shine on him. His dormant time is over. He is rested up and ready to wake up to the warm spring sunshine. He can feel his roots beginning to soak up the moisture from the soil. Farmer Ed spreads fertilizer around the tree.

His sap is beginning to run. His buds that formed the summer before are beginning to swell. Farmer Ed will come through with his spray tractor soon. Sprays prevent black spots on apples and keep insects from feeding on the leaves and making the little tree sick. Soon his buds will burst open into green leaves and beautiful sweet-smelling blossoms.

The little tree loves this time of year. He and all the trees around him are in full bloom. Farmer Ed and his family always take a walk through the orchard during blossom time. The little tree loves to see how much they enjoy this special time of year, too.

The bees also like this time of year. They come out of their hives to gather nectar from the blossoms. They make their honey from the nectar. What the bees don't realize is that while they are busy gathering nectar, they are also spreading pollen from blossom to blossom. The pollen sticks to the bees' fuzzy bodies. This is what causes the blossom to be fertilized so an apple can grow.

As the tiny little apples grow on the tree, the little tree knows that he needs lots of sunshine to keep his leaves healthy. Lots of rain helps his apples grow big and beautiful. If there are too many apples, Farmer Ed will pick some. The apples left on the tree will have more room to grow.

By the end of the summer, the little tree is feeling loaded down with the heavy apples. It is looking forward to fall when the apple harvest will begin. Farmer Ed has done a good job of caring for the tree. He has a beautiful crop of big, red, juicy apples on his branches.

Soon the harvest begins. The orchard is busy with pickers. The little tree is glad to be relieved of its load. The tree is sad to see its beautiful apples go into a big bulk box. Tractors load the boxes onto a truck. The truck takes them down the road to the packing shed where they will be sorted and boxed. They are shipped to market. Some apples are stored in refrigerated rooms to be sold later. Some are sent to processing plants where they are made into applesauce, apple pie slices or apple juice.

Harvest is over. The little tree is sad to see that the pickers are all gone now. The orchard is quiet once more. The days are getting shorter and colder now. Soon it will be time for the little tree to rest for the winter and prepare for another growing season. He smiles as he thinks about the coming spring. Next spring the warm sunshine and spring rains will make the little tree come alive for a new year.

Activity Outline

1. Read and discuss the background information.
2. Have students talk about what happens to the apple tree during each of the seasons.
3. Pass out the "Apple Tree Exercise" worksheet.
4. Have the students number each of the statements in the order that they happen in the story.
5. Ask the students to complete the true and false statements.
6. Ask the students to write their own story on apple production.

Discussion Questions

1. How could you apply the saying, "And the cycle repeats itself," to the story?
2. Why do you think that growing apples is not an easy career?
3. What elements could affect the size or quality of an apple crop?
4. How many foods can you think of that are made from apples?

Related Activities

1. This lesson was provided courtesy of the Michigan Apple Committee. For more information and activities contact: 13105 Schavey Rd., Suite 2, Dewitt, MI 48820, (800) 456-2753, www.MichiganApples.com
2. The lesson "Nature's Toothbrush" located in the health section of this curriculum guide.
3. The lesson "How to Pick the Best" located in the health section of this curriculum guide.
4. The lesson "Apple Math" located in the math section of this curriculum guide.

Book Resources

1. "Apples of Your Eye" by Allan Fowler
2. "Apples Here!" By Will Hubbell

Acknowledgement: This lesson was provided courtesy of the Michigan Apple Committee.

The Apple Tree Exercises

Reading Comprehension

Directions: Place a number (1-7) in front of each statement, putting them in the order as they happened in the story.

- ___ Big, red juicy apples are ready to be picked.
- ___ The little red tree is waking up in the warm spring sunshine. His buds are beginning to swell.
- ___ During dormancy, Farmer Ed has pruned out the branches to let in the sunshine and keep the tree healthy.
- ___ Farmer Ed will spray to protect the tree from disease and harmful insects.
- ___ The bees come out of their hives. They gather nectar to help pollinate the blossoms.
- ___ Harvest is over and the little tree is sad. The orchard is quiet once more.
- ___ The harvest begins. Pickers relieve the little tree of its load.

True or False

Directions: Circle True or False for each statement.

- T or F 1. Apple trees need to be 10 years old to produce a crop of apples.
- T or F 2. Apple buds are formed in the winter during dormancy.
- T or F 3. The bees are very helpful during blossom time.
- T or F 4. Bees realize how important they are in pollinating the blossoms.
- T or F 5. If an apple tree forms too many apples, some will need to be removed.
- T or F 6. Some apples will be processed into applesauce, apple pie slices or apple juice.
- T or F 7. Fresh market apples are stored in refrigerated rooms to be sold later.

The Apple Tree Exercises

Reading Comprehension

Directions: Place a number (1-7) in front of each statement, putting them in the order as they happened in the story.

- __5__ Big, red juicy apples are ready to be picked.
- __2__ The little red tree is waking up in the warm spring sunshine. His buds are beginning to swell.
- __1__ During dormancy, Farmer Ed has pruned out the branches to let in the sunshine and keep the tree healthy.
- __3__ Farmer Ed will spray to protect the tree from disease and harmful insects.
- __4__ The bees come out of their hives. They gather nectar to help pollinate the blossoms.
- __7__ Harvest is over and the little tree is sad. The orchard is quiet once more.
- __6__ The harvest begins. Pickers relieve the little tree of its load.

True or False

Directions: Circle True or False for each statement.

- False 1. Apple trees need to be 10 years old to produce a crop of apples.
- False 2. Apple buds are formed in the winter during dormancy.
- True 3. The bees are very helpful during blossom time.
- False 4. Bees realize how important they are in pollinating the blossoms.
- True 5. If an apple tree forms too many apples, some will need to be removed.
- True 6. Some apples will be processed into applesauce, apple pie slices or apple juice.
- True 7. Fresh market apples are stored in refrigerated rooms to be sold later.