

Grow Your Own Folk and Fairy Tales

OVERVIEW: Many of the favorite fairy and folk tales that young students explore in school can be easily connected to the garden. Students can grow the vegetables mentioned in the stories, compare and contrast different versions of the stories, and act out their favorite version using stick puppets.

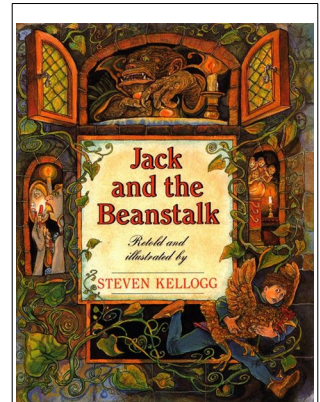
GRADES: PreK-3

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK: This classic story is easy to link with the garden. Grow pole beans in the classroom or start the beans in the classroom and transfer them to garden in mid-May. Be sure that your seed packet says 'pole beans' and not 'bush beans.' Bush beans are the more common seeds found in stores, and they do not grow into a vine.

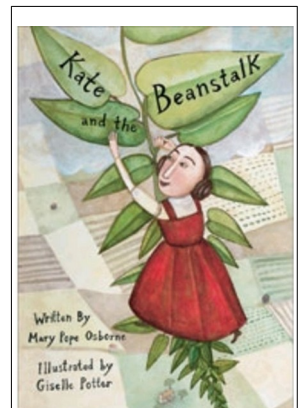
Pair the Jack and the Beanstalk Story with the *New Jersey Agriculture in the Classroom Basic Gardening lesson A Maze for Plants – Discovering Phototropism*. In this lesson, shoe boxes are transformed into a plant maze by cutting a hole in the top and inserting cardboard obstacles the plant must grow around. Place a pot containing a pole bean seedling about two inches high on its side at the bottom of the maze. Close the shoe box and watch the plant wind around. When the plant reaches the top of the maze, it looks just like Jack's beanstalk.

You can even decorate the maze before inserting the plant. Paint the inside blue, paint the bottom green, and glue cotton balls on the cardboard obstacles for clouds. Students can use cardboard to design Jack's cottage at the bottom and the giant's castle at the top. Then let the pole bean grow through the maze, and you have a stage for Jack and the Beanstalk. Students can make stick puppets and act out the story.

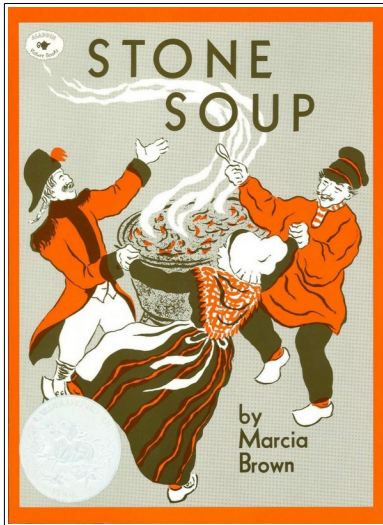
There are so many versions of this story for students to read and compare. They can pick their favorites, and in small groups they can create dialog for a play. Then they can act out their Jack in the Beanstalk story in the garden or using their plant mazes.



Jack and the Beanstalk, by Steven Kellogg



Kate and the Beanstalk, by Mary Pope Osborne



Stone Soup

By Marcia Brown

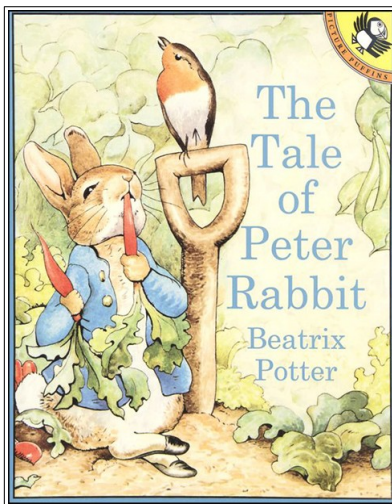
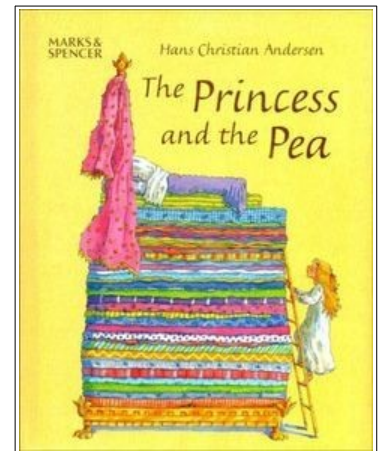
Recreate this classic tale in the classroom by using fall vegetables harvested from your garden. Potatoes, turnips, parsnips, onions, and garlic are all perfect for a fall stew. You can adapt the story for spring garden salad by writing a version called Spoon Salad. Place a metal spoon in a bowl with plain green lettuce. Then have your student townspeople bring red lettuce, kale, spinach, peas, and Swiss chard to spruce up the salad.

The Princess and the Pea

By Hans Christian Anderson

Plant peas in your classroom to accompany this classic fairy tale.

Read and compare different version of the story. And before you plant those pea seeds, have your students place them under a cushion and sit on them to see if you have any real princesses or princes in your midst.



The Tale of Peter Rabbit

By Beatrix Potter

Read about the mishaps of poor Peter Rabbit in Mr. McGregor's garden. In small groups, ask your students to map out McGregor's garden using the descriptions in the book. Have the students use string or yarn to map out their versions of McGregor's garden outside and use the book to follow Peter's route. List the vegetables that Mr. McGregor is growing. What season do you think it is? Could all those vegetables be grown together in New Jersey?

New Jersey Learning Standards

English Language Arts: PreK: RL.PK.1,2,3 K:R.K.1-7 1:RL.1.1-4,,6,7,9
2:RL.2.1-7,9 3:RL.3.1-4,6,7,9