

Our mission is to increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among New Jersey educators and students. You can learn more on our website

newjersey.agclassroom.org

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May is the Month for Flowers!

After our unusually frigid and gloomy start to spring, we are breathing a sigh of relief now that May is here, with its milder temperatures and abundance of flowers.

This is a great time to take a closer look at flowers with your students. Why do plants have flowers? What part do they play in our food chain? Check out our many activities and lessons.

Lessons of the Month

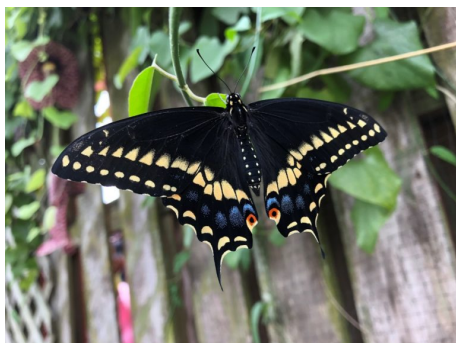
Parts of Flower Grades 3-12

Pistils, stigmas, anthers, stamens, what do they all do? In this lesson, students learn the parts of a flower and what each does for the plant.

They will also learn the how pollinators help plants produce new seeds.



For the lesson for grades 3-5. click [here](#). For the lesson for upper grades, click [here](#).



Plant a Butterfly Garden *Activity suitable for all grades*

Kids of all ages love butterflies, and you can attract them easily to your school grounds by planting the plants they need to survive.

Consider the Eastern black swallowtail, New Jersey's state butterfly. They will eat the nectar of many common flowers such as milkweed or phlox.

To reproduce, however, Eastern black swallowtails

must lay their eggs on plants in the carrot family, including dill, parsley, celery, and rue.

Although you can map out an entire butterfly garden for your school, you don't have to do so much work to attract some butterflies. Just plant a few nectar and host plants for the butterflies you'd like your students to study.



Learn more about butterfly nectar and host plants from Kids Gardening [here](#).
Photos courtesy [Raritan Headwaters](#).



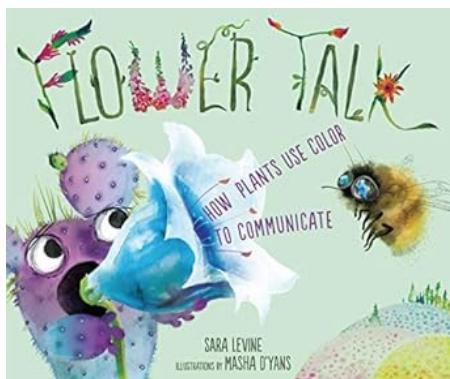
\$1,000 for an Ag Project? Yes, please!

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is now accepting applications for its \$1,000 White-Reinhart grants for K-12 projects that improve agricultural literacy.

If you are interested in starting an agricultural project at your school, or expanding an existing one, please consider submitting an application. Think school gardens, composting, hydroponics, or any ag-related activity.

Click [here](#) for more information and to apply. The application deadline is June 13.

Library Corner



Flower Talk *How Plants Use Color to Communicate* by Sara Levine Grades 2-5

Did you know plants can talk? It's true! Plants use the colors of their flowers to communicate with insects and animals.

Why? Because plants need help to move pollen from one flower to another in order to make new seeds

In this book, a cantakerous cactus

Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert



Planting a Rainbow By Lois Ehlert Grades PreK-1

Through bright cut-paper collages, this story follows a mother and daughter as they plant bulbs, seeds, and seedlings in their backyard.

They watch their flowers grow into all the colors of the rainbow, and then pick them all summer to enjoy inside their home.

And when summer is over, they

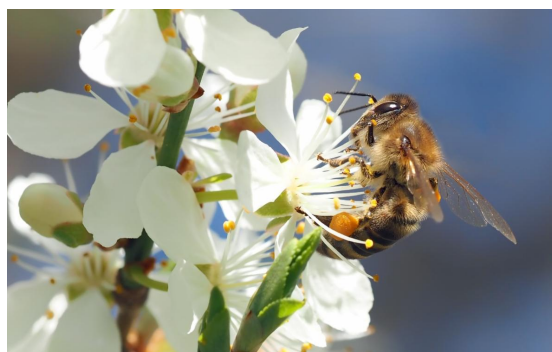
reveals the secrets of how flowers talk.

know they can grow a rainbow again next year.

While Thinking About Flowers Don't Forget the Bees!

Children have a host of different reactions to insects: fascination, disgust, fear.

But it is important for students to know that without some insects, we wouldn't have many of the fruits and vegetables we love to eat.



NJAITC has fun lessons for every grade that enable students to recreate and discuss the process of pollination.

For a PreK-3 pollination game using Cheetos and bee puppets, click [here](#).

For a PreK-3 pollination game using chalk and cotton balls, click [here](#).

For a grades 3-6 pollination activity, click [here](#).

For pollination discussions for upper grades, click [here](#).

Meet a New Jersey Farmer Rose Robson of Robson's Farm

Robson's Farm in Wrightstown, Burlington County grows pick-your-own flowers, as well as apples, peaches, nectarines, and pawpaws.



Tell us your farm story.

I actually never thought I'd be a farmer. I grew up on a farm and thought I'd go into a corporate job. I tried that for a little while, and then decided I was bored and wanted to come home to farm. That was 12 years ago, and I've never been bored since. I mostly grow peaches, apples, and cut flowers. With the flowers, we offer U-Pick and mixed bouquets, and we design flowers for weddings.

What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part of my job is picking flowers or fruit. I love to be at the farm really early or after hours, quietly picking with some music and my dog.

What is the most important thing you want the students to know, that you learned on the farm?

The most important thing I learned on the farm is that when something doesn't work out, it's actually an opportunity. Yes, it might be sad or frustrating, but then it's an exciting

What is your biggest challenge on your family farm?

The biggest challenge with the farm is always going to be the unpredictability of the weather, but that's why I grow flowers and fruit. It's always good to have some back-up plans and diversity in crops.

moment to say to yourself, "Okay, that didn't work, so what will work? What can I try next? What's another direction we can go in?"

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