

# What's Growing On In Virginia?

AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

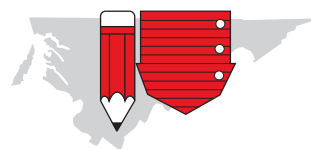
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What's Growing On In Virginia?  
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## Fall for agriculture literacy

**R**eading books is a great way to interest students in a variety of topics—especially agriculture.

Learning about farms and agricultural practices exposes children to new and different concepts. Farm-themed books cover a variety of subjects, from life cycles and natural resources to history and economics.

Encouraging students to read books about farm topics is a good way to teach them using real-world examples. Read on to find out about several AITC favorites and how they can be incorporated into your classroom.

### How Did That Get in My Lunchbox? by Chris Butterworth

#### Best suited for grades K-5

A great book for all ages, this selection explores how food makes its way into students' lunchboxes. It begins with the seeds in the field and follows them through harvesting and processing. Interesting pictures and accessible text make this an excellent read.

#### Classroom Connection:

- For younger students: Give each child a paper plate, and have them use magazines and newspapers to cut out pictures of foods that represent a balanced meal and then glue the pictures onto their plates. Discuss where the food on their plates came from.
- For older students: Have them pick one item from their breakfast or lunch and research the steps it takes to get that food from farm to lunchbox. Then write a journal entry from the perspective of that food, describing its journey.



### Max Goes to the Farm by Adria Klein

#### Best suited for grades pre-K-2

While on a visit to his grandparents, Max and his friend DeShawn have fun helping with chores. Students will learn about the variety of sights to be seen on a farm.

#### Classroom Connection:

One of the things Max and DeShawn see on the farm is dairy cows. Have students make their own birthday dairy cows!

#### Directions:

- Use a paper plate to form the cow's head. Cut out and glue on ears, eyes and a nose.
- Have students cut out black spots; one for each year of their age. Glue spots on the plate.
- Ear tags are used to identify individual farm animals. Have students cut out a square of construction paper for an ear tag. Assign each month a different color. Have students write the numerals for their birthday on it. Attach ear tags to one of the cows' ears.



#### About the Newsletter

What's Growing On In Virginia? is a semiannual publication for Virginia elementary and middle school teachers, published by Agriculture in the Classroom

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For additional information and activities, visit our website at [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org) or call 804-290-1141



## Composting: Nature's Recyclers by Robin Koontz

Best suited for grades 3-5

Learn about all of the ingredients in compost, as well as composting "helpers," the decomposers. This book includes fun facts and interesting pictures on each page.

### Classroom Connection:

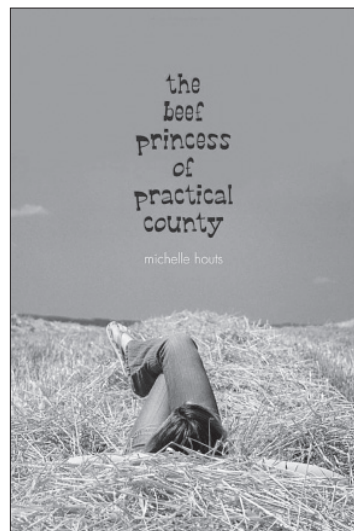
Create your own classroom compost, and then watch it turn into rich humus that helps plants grow.

### Directions:

- To a heavy-duty garbage bag add 1 cup of soil and a half-cup of green or colored materials such as fruit peels, eggshells or grass clippings. Then add a half-cup of shredded brown materials such as newspaper or dry pine needles and leaves.
- Add 1 ounce of water.
- Seal the bag securely with a twist tie, and shake. You may choose to also place the composting bag within another bag to prevent any dripping or mess.
- Over the next several weeks, have students take turns squeezing the bag to mix up the materials. Open the bag every other day for students to observe (This also will help decrease the potential smell). If the mixture begins to dry out, add more water so that it stays moist.

For a complete booklist and more Literacy Connections, visit AITC online at [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

Looking for upper-level books?  
Check out these AITC favorites:



**The Beef Princess  
of Practical County**  
by Michelle Houts



**Justin and the  
Best Biscuits in the World**  
by Mildred Pitts Walker



## LESSON PLAN >> PRESCHOOL - KINDERGARTEN

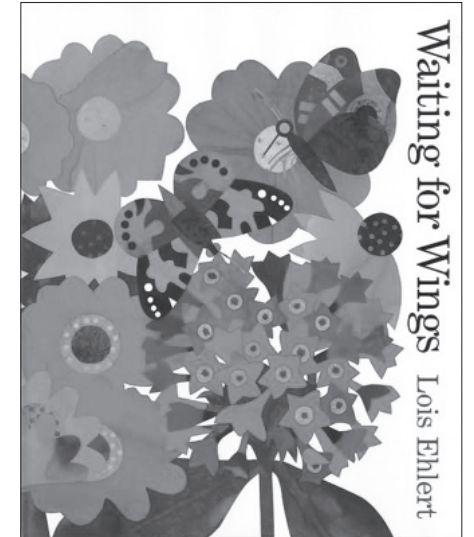
# Rainbow Flowers

### Background Knowledge

Structured fine motor skill development is incorporated in this lesson through painting. Students can learn about the parts of a plant by painting with their hands. An understanding of plant parts will help them develop knowledge about growth and life cycles of plants.

### Procedure

- Prior to the lesson, place a white sheet of paper at each table and set out several paint brushes per student, as well as squirts of each paint color on paper plates.
- Read "Waiting for Wings" by Lois Elhert to the students. Point out all of the parts of the plants, as well as the role of the caterpillars and butterflies.
- Ask the students to write their names on their papers.
- Describe the activity to the children:
  - First, we will paint the roots. This is how plants get the food and water they need to grow.
  - Then we will paint the stem. This is how plants move the food to different parts of the plant.
  - Next we will make leaves, which help the plant make food.
  - We will use yellow paint to make the center of the flower, where pollen is kept.
  - Finally, we will paint the petals using a color of the rainbow.
- Ask the students to paint their hands with brown paint. At the bottom of the page, make brown hand prints with the fingers pointing down, like roots. Wipe the brown paint from the children's hands.
- Use the paintbrush to make a green stem shooting up from the roots.
- Tell the students to make a fist with one of their hands. Paint the side of their hands with green paint, and stamp it along the stem to make leaves. Wipe off the green paint.
- Use the yellow paint and the students' thumbs to make the center of the plant. Wipe off the yellow paint.
- Ask the students to pick a color for their petals. Paint their hands with that color, and make handprints around the center of the flower. The fingers should point into the center. Wipe off the excess paint.
- Hang each painting to dry, and then display around the room.



**CONTENT AREAS:**

**Literacy:** oral expression and vocabulary

**Science:** matter and earth patterns, cycles and changes

**Movement:** fine motor skills

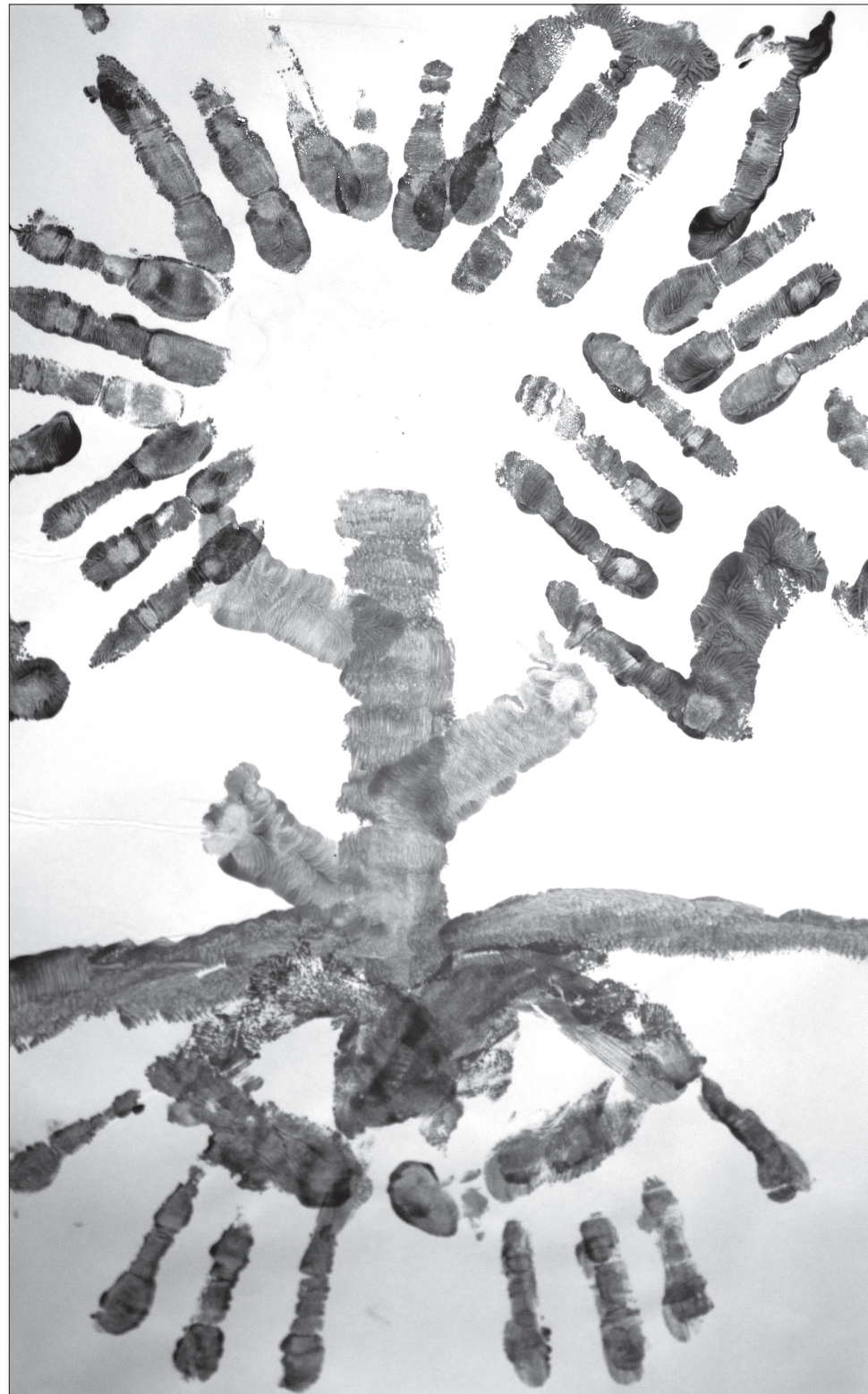
**Objective:** to learn the parts of a plant.

**Materials:**

- "Waiting for Wings" by Lois Elhert, optional
- large sheets of white paper (1 per student)
- green, yellow, red, orange, pink, purple and blue paint
- paper plates
- paintbrushes
- wipes/paper towels

**Extension**

Ask students to write a sentence or draw a picture about their favorite spring activity.

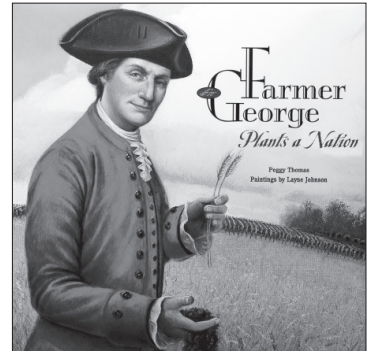
**LESSON PLAN >> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

# George's Journal

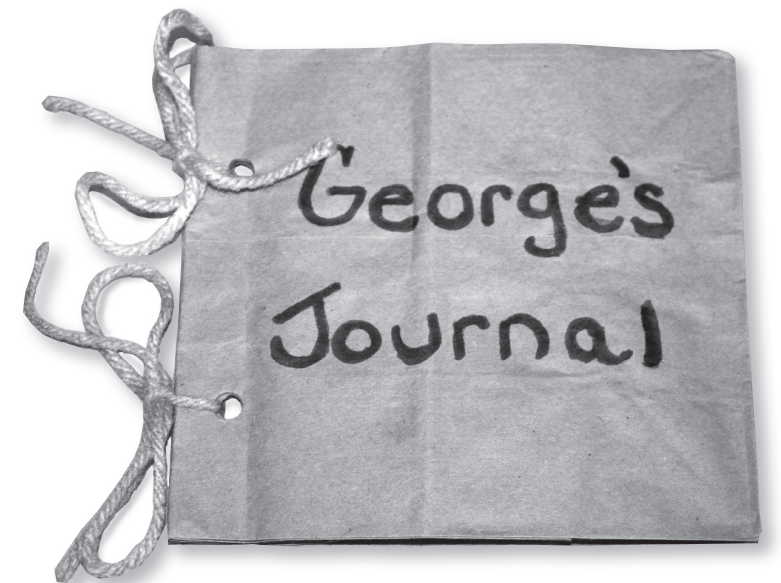
**Background Knowledge**

While most people can identify George Washington as the commander of the Continental Army and first president of the United States, few realize that Washington was also a farmer. He inherited the Mount Vernon plantation from his half-brother, Lawrence, and worked to make it a highly productive, self-sufficient farm.

Washington was actively involved in the running of his farm and experimented with various plants, crop rotations and fertilizers. Additionally, he designed both a new plow and a 16-sided barn. The shape of this unique barn allowed wheat to be treaded (trampled by horses) inside. In the mid 1700s Washington had transitioned his main cash crop from tobacco to wheat and corn. He knew that wheat did not deplete the soil as much as tobacco and could be sold in many markets, including Europe and the West Indies.

**Procedure**

- Read and discuss "Farmer George Plants a Nation" by Peggy Thomas. Point out how the book includes excerpts from entries in Washington's journal. Discuss the purpose of diaries and journals.
- Tell students that they will be re-creating Washington's journal. They will begin by identifying significant events (You may determine the number necessary) and contributions in his life. Sequence these events in order from earliest to latest.
- Next, pass out paper bags to students (The number of bags is dependent upon how many facts/pages you want your students to include).
- Fold the bags from end to end. Hole-punch two holes near the fold (It is suggested that you do this with a three-hole punch prior to beginning the lesson) about 2 inches apart.
- Thread yarn through the holes to bind the bags together.
- Write the title, "George's Journal" on the outside.
- Next, have students make entries into the journal using the previously identified events and contributions.

**SOL:**

History: 2.11, 3.7, VS.5  
Language Arts: 2.12, 3.9, 4.7

**Objective:**

to create a journal depicting events in the life of, and contributions by, George Washington.

**Materials:**

- brown paper bags
- hole punch
- yarn
- scissors
- markers/crayons
- "Farmer George Plants a Nation" by Peggy Thomas (optional)

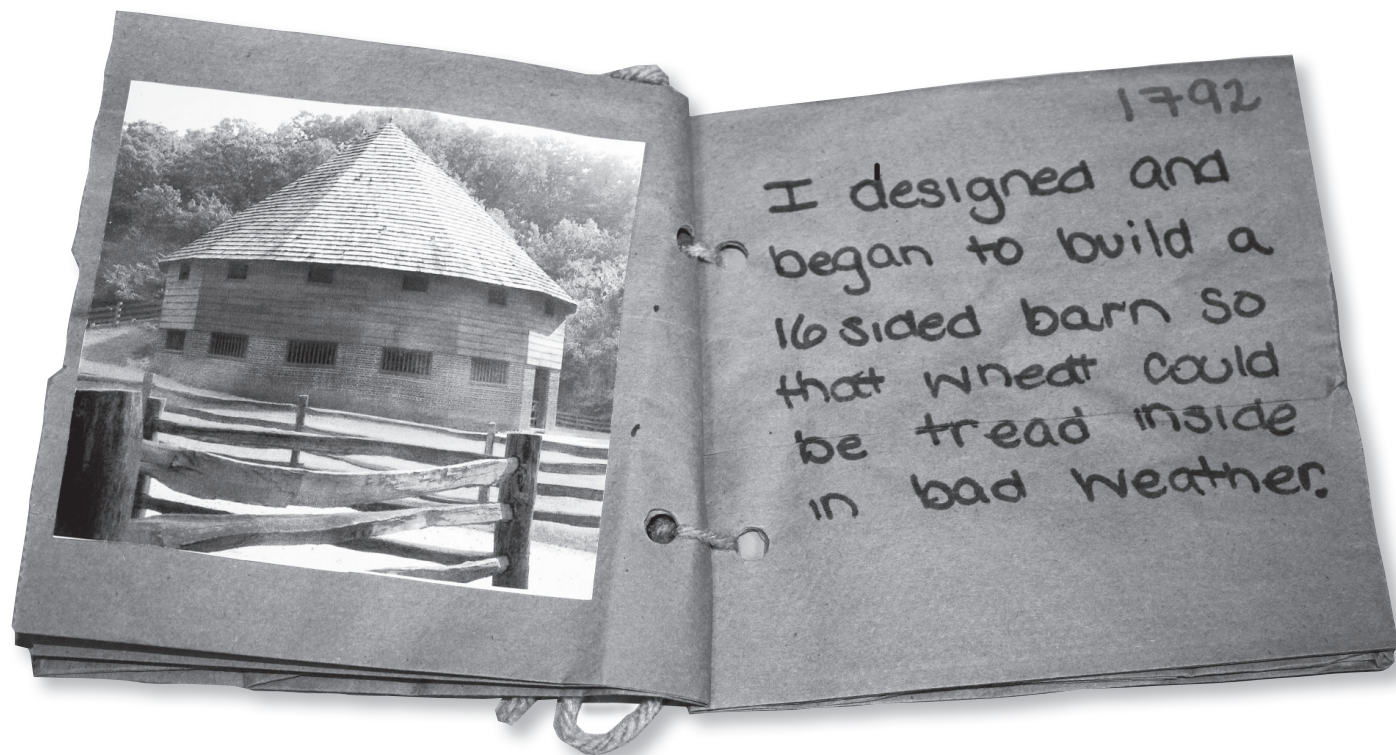
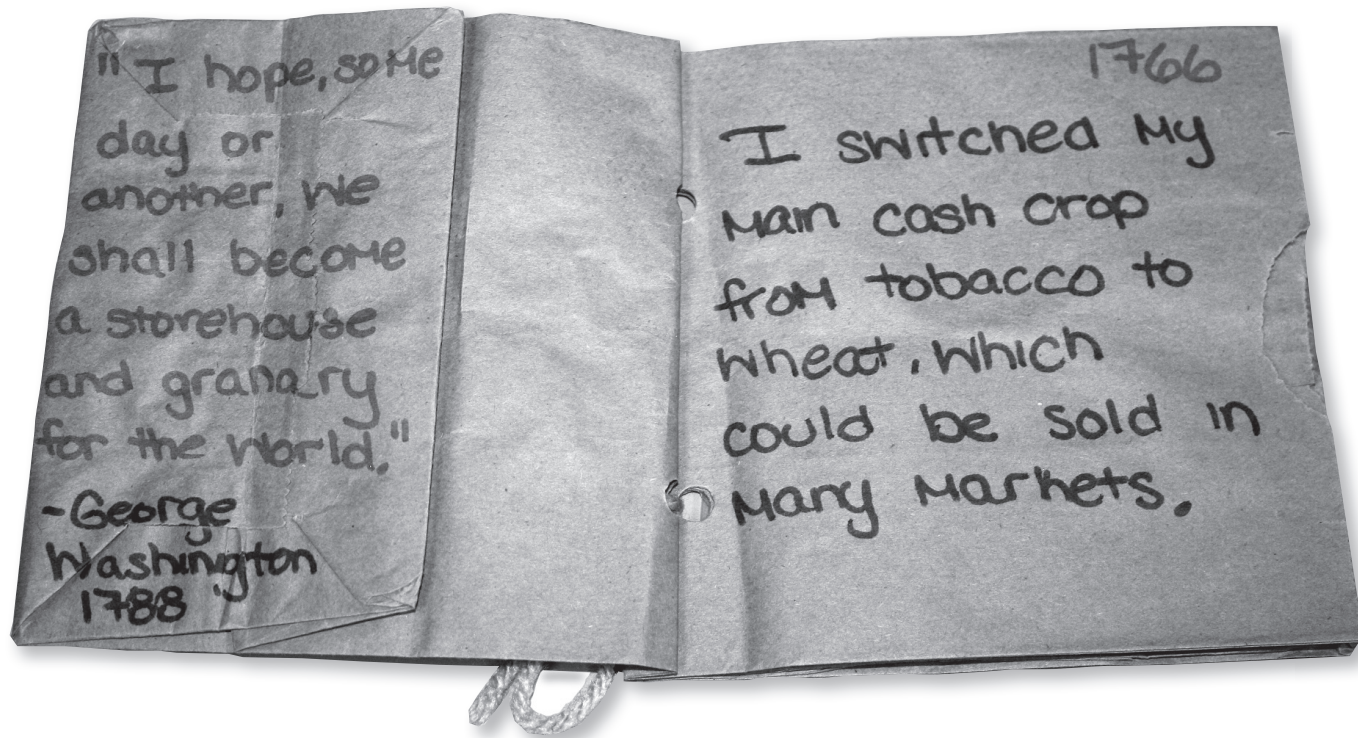


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- Use the pouches of the bags to insert pictures or other "artifacts" to illustrate the entries.
- Have students share their journals with the class.



## Try This: Make a Story-Chain

Here's a bonus activity to use in your classroom.

### Materials:

paper plates, staplers, tape, construction paper, yarn, markers

### Directions:

- Give each student five small pieces of construction paper.
- On each piece of paper, have them write a major event from a book (teacher's or student's choice).
- Sequence the events in the correct order, and number them 1 through 5.
- Give each student a yard of yarn. Have them tape the events to the yarn in the correct order (left to right).
- Next, pass out a white paper plate to each student. Have them write the title of the book on the plate and add an illustration.
- Pass out half of a paper plate to each student. Staple this to the back of the whole plate to form a pocket.
- Attach the yarn to the pocket so that the story chain can fit in the pocket.
- Pair up students, and have the pairs take turns retelling the book using their story chains.

## AITC Program Highlights

### Conferences include AITC sessions

Come see AITC at several educational conferences this year. We will be conducting sessions at the Virginia Association of Science Teachers Conference, the National Social Studies Educators Conference, the Virginia Early Childhood Education Conference and the Virginia Educational Media Association Conference.

Can't make it to a conference? AITC will come to you! Contact us at [aitc@vafb.com](mailto:aitc@vafb.com) or 804-290-1025 to schedule a professional development workshop for your school or division. All workshops are provided free of charge and feature standards-aligned, cross-curricular lessons.

### Online math resources

AITC is proud to present its newest teacher resource—Mathematics Activities, now available at [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org). Visit the site to download this comprehensive K-5 mathematics book.

