



Merry Lea

Environmental Learning Center
of Goshen College

Exploring Merry Lea Teaching Farm 3rd - 5th

Program Description

Merry Lea Teaching Farm is a unique edible ecosystem where students taste their way to an understanding of humans, farm and habitat connections. Students delve into soil ecosystems, search for pollinators at work and meet our animals living at the farm. Making apple cider provides students a memorable example of how food can be processed before we consume it.

Program Objectives

Students will learn how:

- Food comes from farms
- Farms are ecosystems! (Communities of plants and animals)
- Farms are managed by people, who are also an important part of the farm.

Program Outline

*Activities may vary based on group size and length of trip

1. Farm Stations: Students rotate through different stations focused on the importance each place plays on the farm.
 - Animal Barn
 - Garden Exploration
 - Farms as an Ecosystem
 - Compost
2. Trail Activities: Students stop and make observations about an ecosystem while on the trail (wetland, forest, prairie).
3. Cider Pressing
4. Group Game

Vocabulary

- Ecosystem
- Producer
- Decomposer
- Consumer
- Processed

Quick Facts

Season Fall: September - November

Grades 3rd - 5th

Program 4 hours

Maximum # of Students 80 Students

Standards Correlation

LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms: Reproduction is essential to the continued existence of every kind of organism. Plants and animals have unique and diverse life cycles. (3-LS1-1)

LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Populations live in a variety of habitats, and change in those habitats affects the organisms living there (3-LS4-4)

LS4.D: Biodiversity and Humans: Populations live in a variety of habitats, and change in those habitats affects the organisms living there. (3-LS4-4)

ESS3.A: Natural Resources: Energy and fuels that humans use are derived from natural sources, and their use affects the environment in multiple ways. Some resources are renewable over time, and others are not.

LS1.A: Structure and Function Plants and animals have both internal and external structures that serve various functions in growth, survival, behavior, and reproduction. (4-LS1-1)

ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments. (5-ESS3-1)

LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: see standards correl. doc for full description...A healthy ecosystem is one in which multiple species of different types are each able to meet their needs in a relatively stable web of life. (5-LS2-1)

LS2.B: Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems: Matter cycles between the air and soil and among plants, animals, and microbes as these organisms live and die. Organisms obtain gasses, and water, from the environment, and release waste matter (gas, liquid, or solid) back into the environment. (5-LS2-1)

LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms: Food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and the energy they need to maintain body warmth and for motion. (secondary to 5-PS3-1)