Merry Lea
Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College

Exploring Merry Lea Teaching Farm

9 - 12th

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

- Habitat
- Forest
- Wetland
- Prairie
- Farm
- Processed
- Stem
- Root
- Leaf

Quick Facts

Season Fall: September - November

Grades 9th - 12th

Program 4 hours

Maximum # of Students 80 Students

Standards Correlation

ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems: The sustainability of human societies and the biodiversity that supports them requires responsible management of natural resources. (HS-ESS3-3)

ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solution: When evaluating solutions it is important to take into account a range of constraints including cost, safety, reliability and aesthetics and to consider social, cultural and environmental impacts. (secondary to HS-LS2-7) (secondary to HS-LS4-6)

LS4.C: Adaptation: Changes in the physical environment, whether naturally occurring or human induced, have thus contributed to the expansion of some species, the emergence of new distinct species as populations diverge under different conditions, and the decline–and sometimes the extinction–of some species. (HS-LS4-5),(HS-LS4-6)

LS4.D: Biodiversity and Humans: Humans depend on the living world for the resources and other benefits provided by biodiversity. But human activity is also having adverse impacts on biodiversity through overpopulation, overexploitation, habitat destruction, pollution, introduction of invasive species, and climate change. Thus sustaining biodiversity so that ecosystem functioning and productivity are maintained is essential to supporting and enhancing life on Earth. Sustaining biodiversity also aids humanity by preserving landscapes of recreational or inspirational value. (secondary to HS-LS2-7) (HS-LS4-6)

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