



DRIVE THROUGH FLORIDA VEGETABLES

A Florida Agriculture Literacy Day Book



FLORIDA AGRICULTURE LITERACY DAY

is an annual event held each spring in which hundreds of agriculture industry representatives read a designated children's book about agriculture in elementary school classrooms around the state. The event is a partnership between Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

FLORIDA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

is a non-profit organization charged with educating Florida teachers and students in kindergarten through 12th grade about the importance of Florida agriculture. It is funded by sales of the agriculture specialty license plate known as the "Ag Tag." Florida Agriculture in the Classroom is able to provide Agriculture Literacy Day books and other related items free of charge because of the funding it receives from the Ag Tag.



DRIVE THROUGH FLORIDA

VEGETABLES

A Florida Agriculture Literacy Day Book

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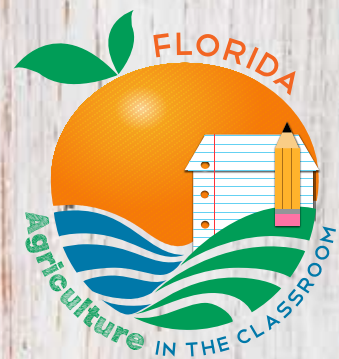


Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

Commissioner Adam H. Putnam



www.FreshFromFlorida.com



"Educate Students About Florida Agriculture"
(352) 846-1391 www.AgTag.org

Special thanks to Florida Farm Bureau's Women's Committee for its support.

HI THERE!



Do you know me? I'm Ole Red and I'm going to take you on a tour of vegetable farms all over Florida. Do you remember another word for farming? It is agriculture.

Agriculture is the business of growing crops and raising animals for food and other uses. Are you ready to go? Then buckle your seatbelts and get ready for our trip!





Lots of tomatoes grow in Manatee County. Let's go see them.

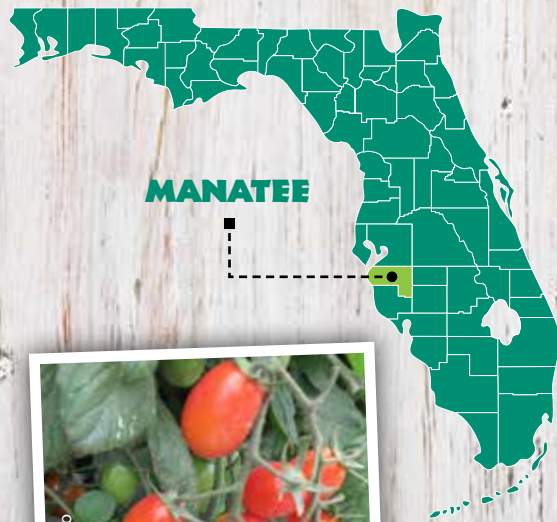
TOMATOES



EATING PIZZA



FRENCH FRIES AND KETCHUP



TOMATOES GROWING ON PLANT

Can you imagine eating a pizza without tomato sauce or French fries without ketchup? We don't have to worry because we are number one in the nation for fresh tomatoes.

Today we know that tomatoes are healthy and delicious. But did you know that early colonists thought that tomatoes were poisonous because they were bright red?

Little by little, people realized how great they tasted.



MOVING THE TOMATO CROP, 1921

State Archives of Florida



TOMATO PLANTS IN FIELD

FFVA File Photo



HARVESTED



SORTING TOMATOES

FFVA File Photo



SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE TOMATOES

In the 1800s, Florida farmers started to send tomatoes by railroad or boat to the north.

Now we send fresh tomatoes all over the United States, and to Canada and other countries.

We grow so many tomatoes in Florida that if you harvested them all at the same time they would weigh more than one billion pounds.

Tomatoes love our sunshine! We grow them in the winter months when it is too cold in many other states.

With all this sunny weather, Florida grows many different kinds of tomatoes – small, medium and large.

And the more sun the tomato gets, the sweeter it is!

FUN FACTS



FLORIDA TOMATOES ARE GROWN ON BETWEEN **30,000** AND **40,000** ACRES OF LAND EACH YEAR.



AMERICANS CONSUME **75%** OF ALL TOMATOES AS SALICES, SALSAS AND KETCHUP.



SCIENTISTS CALL TOMATOES A **FRUIT**, BUT COOKS CALL THEM A **VEGETABLE.**



We love to eat squash and Hillsborough County has the greatest number of squash farms.

SQUASH



UF/IFAS File Photo

CHECKING SQUASH PLANT FOR PESTS

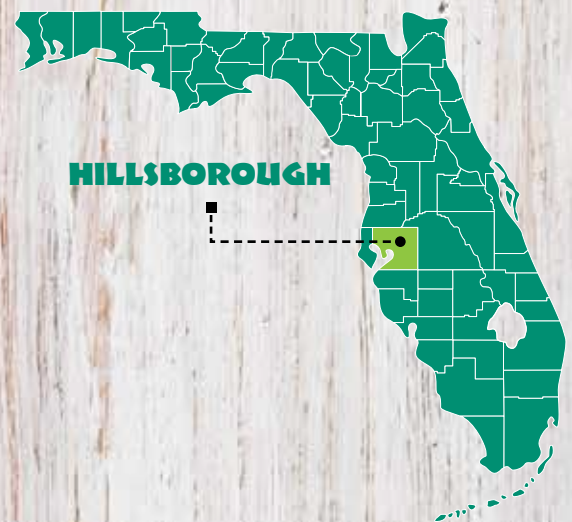
Squash isn't just something we eat; it is also the name of a sport, or something you might do to bugs.

But the name for the vegetable comes from the Indian word askutasquash (ah-skoot-ah-skwoh), meaning "eaten raw or uncooked."



9,000 FOOTBALL FIELDS

Florida is the number one squash growing state because squash likes the heat and we have plenty of it. Florida farmers grow squash on more than 9,000 acres of land. (An acre is about the size of a football field.)



askutasquash

(ah-skoot-ah-skwoh), meaning "eaten raw or uncooked."



SUMMER SQUASH



SQUASH FLOWER

Did you know that a flower can be a male or female? Squash plants have male and female flowers on the same plant. They must be pollinated and growers pay beekeepers to have bee colonies do the work!

There are different types of squash – winter and summer. Both winter and summer squash can be grown in Florida but we grow more summer squash than winter squash.

Did you know that the pumpkin is in the same family as the yellow squash? And many pumpkin pies are made from winter squash. What would Thanksgiving be without them!



WINTER SQUASH IS USED IN PUMPKIN PIES



WINTER SQUASH



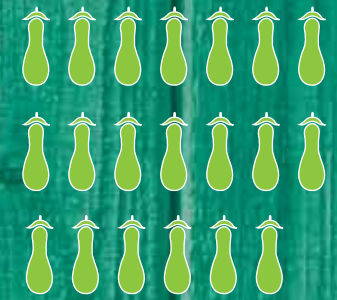
FUN FACTS

THE SHELLS FROM WINTER SQUASH CAN BE USED AS CONTAINERS.

SQUASH COMES IN MANY COLORS INCLUDING YELLOW, TAN, PURPLE, BLUE, WHITE, GREEN AND ORANGE.



THERE ARE OVER 20 DIFFERENT TYPES OF SQUASH.





Next stop is down to Miami-Dade County where most of our snap beans are grown. So buckle up and let's go see!

SNAP BEANS



SNAP BEANS READY FOR SHIPMENT

Do you know why we call them snap beans? Because they snap when bent. But whether you call them snap beans, string beans or green beans, they are all the same.

Have you ever heard of the “three sisters of gardening?” American Indians planted corn, snap beans and squash together. As they grow, they support each other just like sisters.



THREE SISTERS OF GARDENING



**BUSH BEANS
IN THE FIELD**



ON THE VINE



**PROCESSING AND
SORTING**



SNAP BEAN PLANT



**PREPARING SNAP
BEANS FOR DINNER**

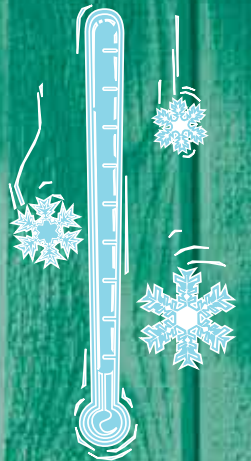
Snap beans like to grow in loamy soil and hot weather. South Florida has plenty of those two things. There are two common types of snap beans: bush beans and pole beans. Bush beans are planted in rows and pole beans are planted against a teepee so they can climb. But in South Florida we grow mostly bush beans.

Have you ever eaten green bean casserole on Thanksgiving? I bet you didn't know that fresh Florida snap beans are used for Thanksgiving dinners all over the country!

FUN FACTS



**SNAP BEANS
DO NOT
LIKE THE
COLD. THEY
WILL BE
DAMAGED
WHEN THE
WEATHER
FALLS
BELOW
28
DEGREES.**



**SPILL
THE BEANS - IS A
PHRASE USED WHEN
DESCRIBING SOMEBODY
WHO TELLS A SECRET
OR THE TRUTH.**

**SNAP BEANS WILL
CONTINUE TO
COOK
AFTER YOU REMOVE THEM
FROM BOILING WATER.**





Let's take a short drive north to Palm Beach County to learn about sweet corn.

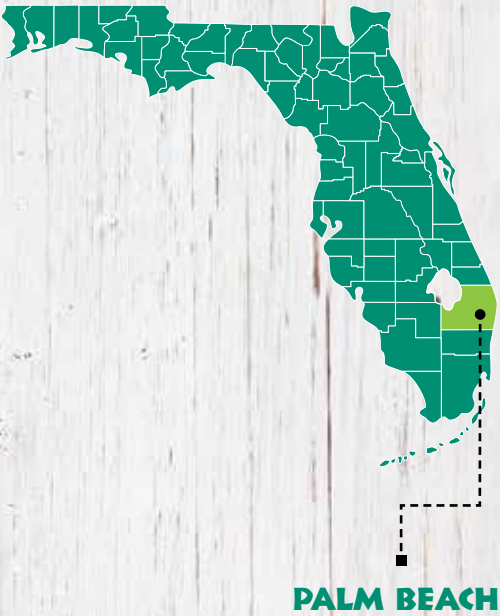


SWEET CORN

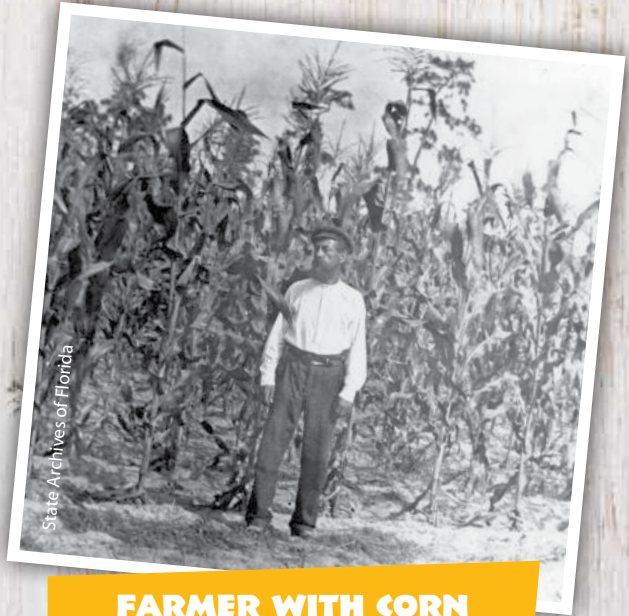


State Archives of Florida

SEMINOLE WOMEN POUNDING CORN IN EVERGLADES CITY.



PALM BEACH



State Archives of Florida

FARMER WITH CORN CROP IN PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 1915

Do you like corn at summer barbeques?

When the first Spanish and French settlers came to the new world they learned how to grow Indian corn or maize from the American Indians.

By the 1800s most Florida settlers grew their own corn to feed themselves and their livestock.



HARVESTED CORN



FARM MANAGER CHECKING CORN



CORN HARVESTING MACHINERY

Sweet corn was grown by the American Indians and first collected by European settlers in the 1700s.

In the past, sweet corn was not really that sweet. But plant breeders have worked hard to make sweet corn, sweeter.

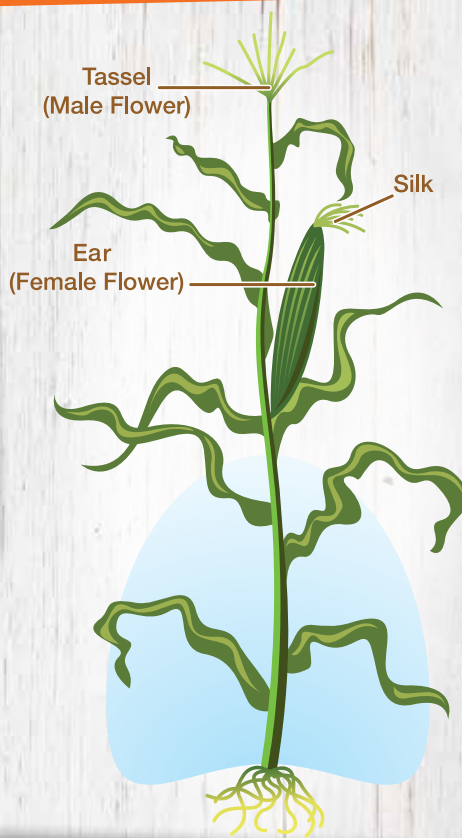
Today, most corn grown in Florida is super sweet corn. We are very lucky because super sweet corn likes our muck, sandy or limestone soils.

We grow so much sweet corn because of our ideal growing conditions that Florida is the number one producer of it in the United States.



IT TASTES GREAT!

So enjoy all the sweet corn that you like, we have plenty.



FUN FACTS

TO GET A CORN COB FULL OF **KERNELS** EACH SILK NEEDS TO BE POLLINATED WITH POLLEN FROM THE TASSEL.



THE **SILK** IS THE FEMALE PART OF THE PLANT. THE MALE IS THE **TASSEL** ON THE TOP OF THE PLANT.

PEOPLE USED PARCHED CORN KERNELS AS A **COFFEE** SUBSTITUTE DURING THE CIVIL WAR.

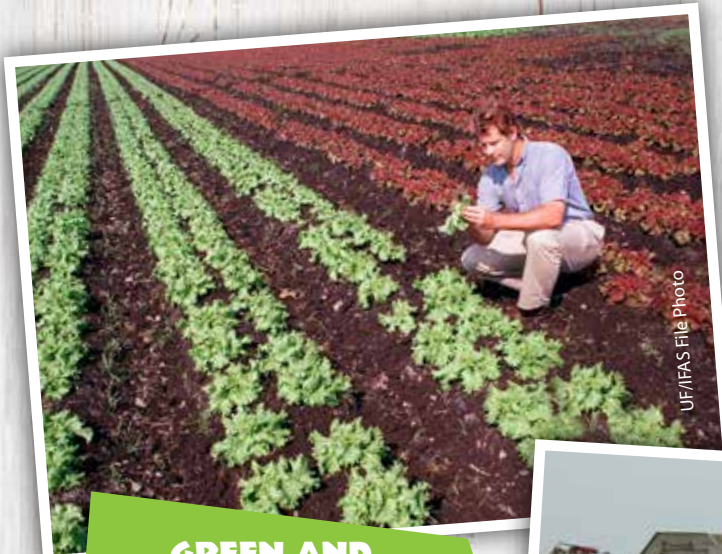


SWEET CORN IS A WHOLE GRAIN FOOD, HIGH IN **FIBER** AND LOW IN FAT.



There is a lot growing in Palm Beach County. Our next stop is a lettuce farm!

LETTUCE



UF/IFAS File Photo

GREEN AND RED LEAF LETTUCE



PALM BEACH



UF/IFAS File Photo

PACKING LETTUCE

Lettuce can grow in many different soils, but it really likes the muck soil near Lake Okeechobee.

Lettuce is a cool season crop. It is sometimes grown on the same land as sweet corn, which is called crop rotation.



**CRUNCHY
IN SANDWICHES**

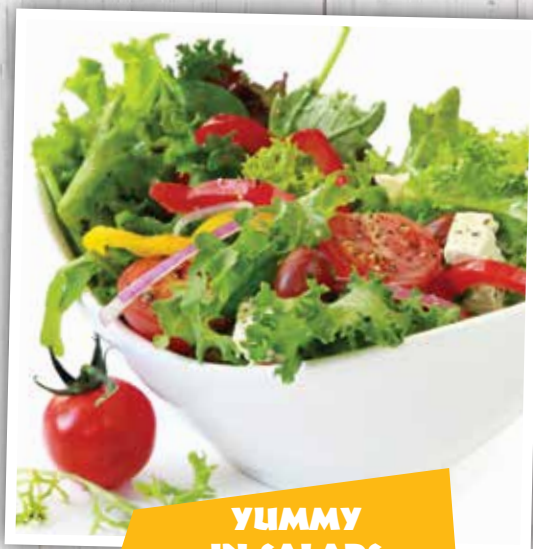
Lettuce is another great Florida vegetable that keeps us healthy. Without it we wouldn't have salads to eat and sandwiches would not crunch when we take a bite. That would not be much fun.

There are two types of lettuce: non-heading and heading lettuce. Florida farmers grow more non-heading lettuce.

Romaine and leaf lettuce are grown the most in Florida. These are non-heading lettuces. They like Florida's warmer weather and have lots of vitamins.

Iceberg lettuce is a heading variety of lettuce. These types of lettuces get their name because they are shaped like your head.

Farmers use over 9,900 acres of land from 87 different farms to grow all the different kinds of lettuce. That's a lot of lettuce!



**YUMMY
IN SALADS**



**NON-HEADING
LETTUCE**



HEADING LETTUCE



**HARVESTING IN
THE FIELD**

FUN FACTS



AMERICANS EAT

30

**POUNDS OF LETTUCE
PER PERSON
EVERY YEAR.**



LETTUCE IS A
MEMBER OF
THE SUNFLOWER

FAMILY.



LETTUCE LEAVES THAT
ARE DARKER IN
COLOR CONTAIN MORE

VITAMINS

AND MINERALS THAN THE
PALER COLOR VARIETIES.

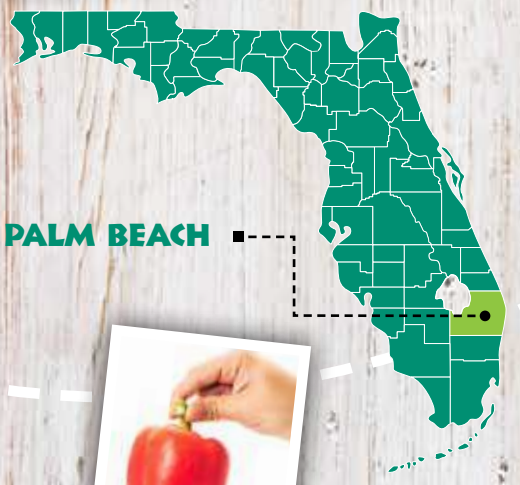


Do you hear that bell ringing? Let's stay here in Palm Beach County to learn about bell peppers.

BELL PEPPERS



STUFFED WITH MEAT



PALM BEACH



GREEN, YELLOW AND RED PEPPERS

You can eat them fresh, grilled, pan-fried or stuff them with meat or rice for baking.

Do you know that a green, yellow, and red bell pepper are all the same pepper? Peppers get sweeter and milder tasting as they change in color from green to red and get riper on the plant.



GRILLED ON SKEWERS

A bell pepper may look like a bell, but it does not sound like a bell. Bell peppers get their name because they have three or four lobes on the bottom and a handle like a bell.



PEPPER PLANT

When green, yellow and red peppers are sold together what do you think we call them? That's right we call them "traffic light" peppers!

Farmers plant bell peppers from July to February, but they do not like real hot weather. Bell peppers are usually harvested between November and May.

Our farmers harvest more than 350 million bushels of peppers each year, which makes us number two in the nation. It takes a lot of people to get our bell peppers to the supermarket.



CLEANING AND PROCESSING



GROWING HYDROPONIC PEPPERS



PEPPERS IN THE FIELD



FUN FACTS

BELL PEPPERS ARE **COUSINS** TO PIMENTOS AND CAYENNE PEPPERS.

PAPRIKA IS A SPICE MADE FROM DRIED PEPPERS.



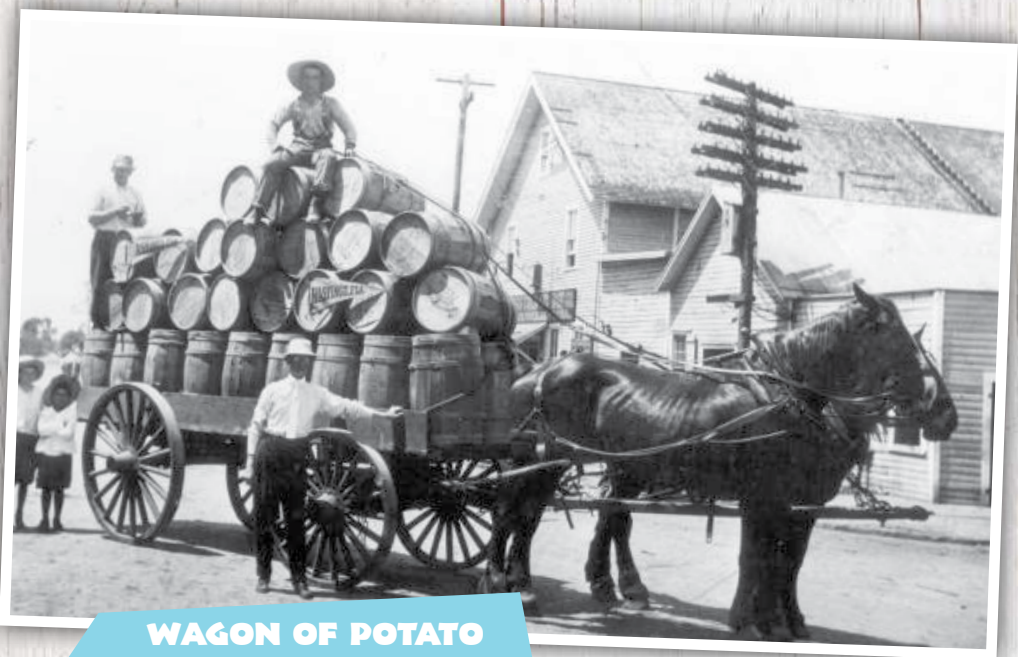
PEPPERS CAN ALSO BE BROWN, PURPLE, MAROON OR WHITE.



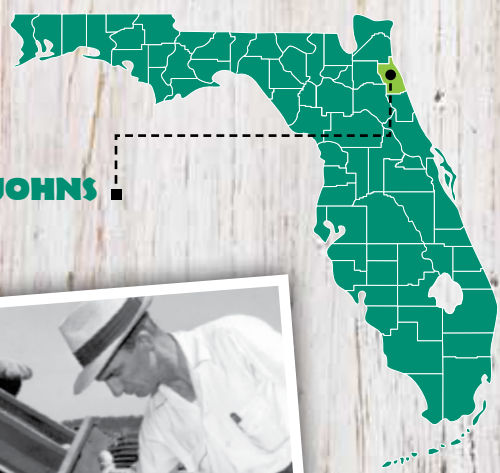


Hop back in as we head north to St. Johns County where we can put our “eyes” on potatoes!

POTATOES



WAGON OF POTATO BARRELS, 1910S



ST. JOHNS



NEW HARVESTING MACHINE, 1947

In 1890, Thomas Horace Hastings wanted to grow vegetables to sell to hotels near St. Augustine.

He tried many different crops, but Irish potatoes grew the best. Today, the town of Hastings is known as Florida’s Potato Capital.



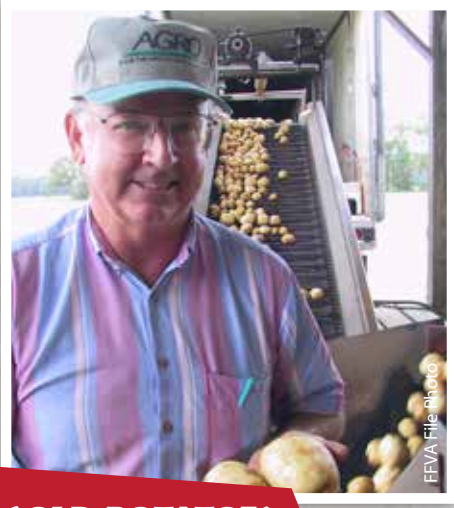
FFVA File Photo

MODERN MACHINERY



FFVA File Photo

POTATO PLANT



FFVA File Photo

GOLD POTATOES



FFVA File Photo

RED POTATOES

There are many varieties of potatoes, usually with red, gold or white skins.

Potatoes grow underground during cooler weather as tubers at the ends of stems. They are grown for both the fresh market and to make potato chips.

Lots of people like potatoes, and Florida farmers harvest over 35,000 acres of potatoes each year. That's about 26,000 football fields!

What do we do with all those fresh potatoes? We make potato salad, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, French fries... I could go on and on.



BAKED POTATO

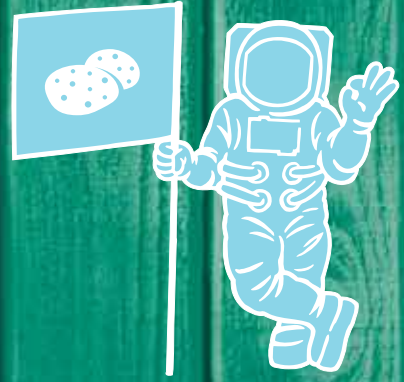


FRENCH FRIES



FUN FACTS

THE POTATO WAS THE **FIRST** VEGETABLE TO BE GROWN IN SPACE.



AMERICANS EAT AN AVERAGE OF **125** POUNDS OF POTATOES PER PERSON EACH YEAR.

THOMAS JEFFERSON INTRODUCED **FRENCH FRIES** TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



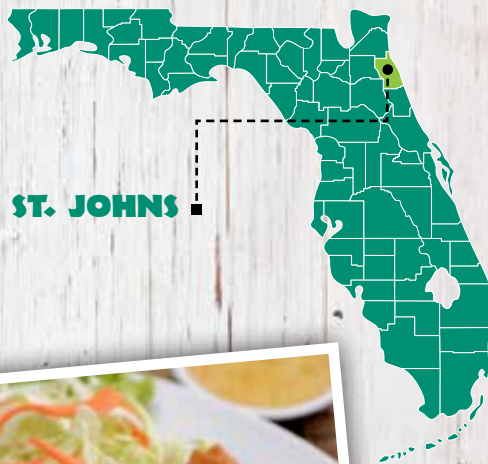
CABBAGE



FFVA File Photo

CABBAGE IN THE FIELD

Thanks to St. Johns and Flagler counties, Florida ranks number three in cabbage production in the United States. That's good news because you can't have coleslaw, sauerkraut or egg rolls without cabbage! And don't forget St. Patrick's Day when people like to eat corned beef and cabbage.



ST. JOHNS



COLE SLAW AND EGG ROLLS

Cabbage can be green or red, but we grow mostly green cabbage. Each year, Florida farmers grow cabbage on nearly 9,000 acres.



FFVA File Photo

READY FOR THE STORE



FFVA File Photo

LOADED FOR PACKING



CUCUMBERS



CUCUMBERS ON THE VINE

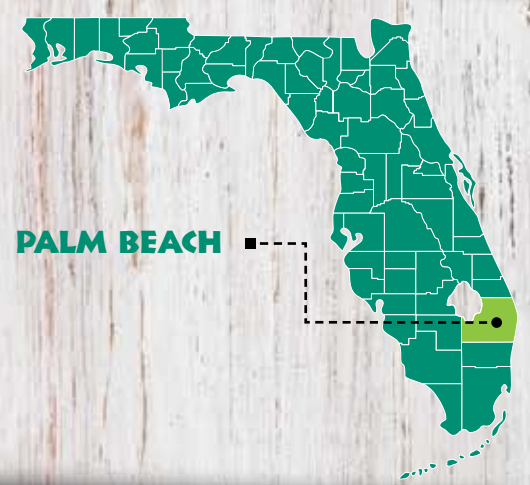
Why do some people say they are “as cool as a cucumber?” Cucumbers are about 96 percent water, which will keep you very cool.

Cucumbers grow on vines. They need a lot of space to spread out and need to be watered every week.



HARVESTING CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers are grown on 337 Florida farms using a total of 10,000 acres of land. Many of these farms are in Palm Beach County. Cucumbers are eaten fresh and are also used to make pickles.



READY FOR CLEANING AND PACKING



CELERY



CELERY IN THE GREENHOUSE



HARVESTING CELERY

Celery takes six months to grow. It spends the first three months in a greenhouse and then three months in the field. That's a long time to wait, but farmers think it's worth it. It grows best on the shores of Lake Okeechobee, in South Florida in an organic soil called muck.

Florida farmers plant celery so it can be used in stuffing and special salads during the winter holidays – or eaten with peanut butter or cream cheese year round. It's a healthy snack. In fact, celery has been used to help sick people with stomach aches, colds and much more.



READY FOR SHIPMENT



RADISHES



JUST PICKED



Radishes are another muck-loving Palm Beach county crop.

Most radishes are used in salads, they have a crunchy, peppery taste and are usually small, round and red. They look like tomatoes with tails! But radishes can also be white or purple. Radishes are the roots of the plants so they are grown underground.



RADISH SALAD



RADISHES ARE THE ROOT

Farmers plant 6,000 acres of radishes each year. Radishes are fast growers and can be harvested in three to six weeks after planting.

MORE FUN FACTS



Please help me remember all of these important facts!



TOMATOES

can be small, medium and large. They are used fresh, or in salsas, ketchup and pizzas.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Potassium, vitamins A and C

AVAILABILITY

October through June



SQUASH

Florida farmers grow winter and summer squash. Winter squash is used in pumpkin pies.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Potassium, vitamins C, A and B6

AVAILABILITY

Summer squash: October through May
Winter squash: Early fall through winter



SNAP BEANS

are long and green. They snap when bent. They are used in Thanksgiving dinners all over the country.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Folate, vitamins A, C and K

AVAILABILITY

November through May



SWEET CORN

is much sweeter now than it used to be. It is great at summer barbeques.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Fiber, folate, thiamin, vitamin C

AVAILABILITY

October through June



LETTUCE

is used in healthy salads and crunchy sandwiches. Florida farmers grow leaf lettuce and head lettuce.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Leaf lettuce: vitamins A and K
Head lettuce: vitamin K

AVAILABILITY

December through April



BELL PEPPERS

can be green, yellow or red. You can eat them fresh, grilled, pan fried or stuffed for baking.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Vitamins A, C and B-6

AVAILABILITY

November through May



POTATOES

can be red, gold or white. We eat potato salad, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, and potato chips.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Potassium, niacin vitamins B-6 and C

AVAILABILITY

February through June



CABBAGE

is usually green, but sometimes it is red. It is used in egg rolls, sauerkraut and cole slaw.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Vitamins K and C

AVAILABILITY

December through May



CUCUMBERS

can be eaten fresh or as pickles.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Vitamins K and C

AVAILABILITY

October through December, March through May



CELERY

is eaten in turkey stuffing or as a snack with peanut butter or cream cheese.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Folate, vitamins A and K

AVAILABILITY

December through May



RADISHES

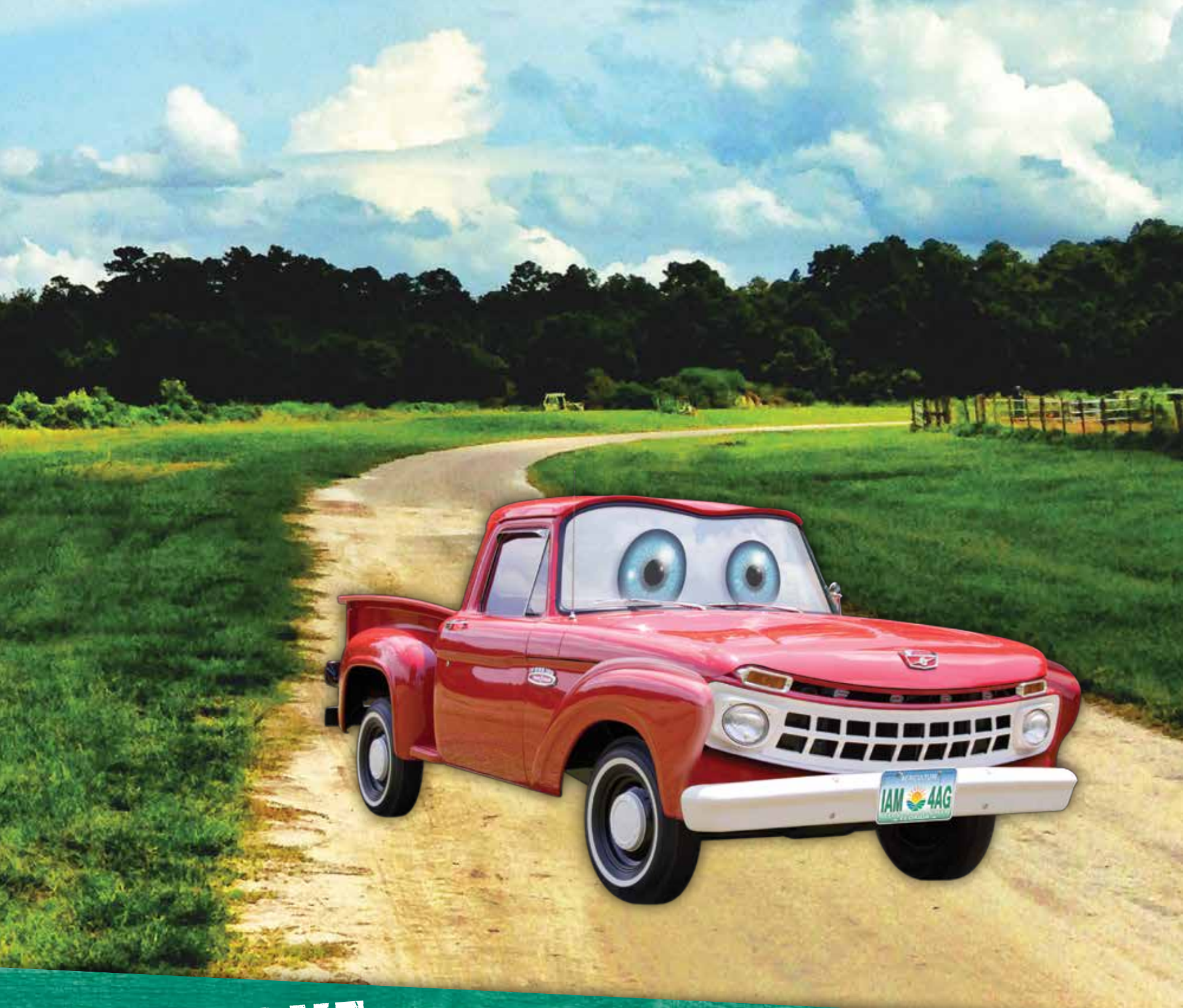
look like tomatoes with tails. They are eaten in salads or cooked dishes.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Potassium, vitamin C

AVAILABILITY

November through May



GOODBYE

We've come to the end of our trip. Now you know some yummy vegetables that grow in

Florida and how they are used in many of our favorite dishes. Be sure to look for "Fresh From

Florida" vegetables at the grocery store, farmers markets and in restaurants. See you next year!

DEFINITIONS

ACRE: A unit of land area equal to 4,840 square yards.

BEE COLONIES: Large assemblies of bees, including a queen bee, and in the summer, hundreds or thousands of worker bees that cooperate in nest building and food collection.

BENEFIT: Something good, an improvement.

BUSHEL: A unit of measure equal to 64 US pints (35.2 liters), which is used for dry goods.

CAPITAL: The most important city or town of a country or region, usually its seat of government and administrative center.

CASSEROLE: A mix of food baked and served in a deep dish.

COMMERCIALLY: A word used to describe items that are bought and sold by businesses.

CONSERVING: Using or managing (natural resources) wisely.

COLONISTS: A group of people who leave their native country to form a settlement in a new land.

CONDITIONS: The way things are at a certain time or in a certain place.

CROP ROTATION: The system of varying successive crops in a definite order on the same ground, especially to avoid depleting the soil and to control weeds, diseases and pests.

DESCENDANT: A plant or animal that is related to a particular plant or animal that lived long ago.

GREENHOUSE: A building with a transparent roof and walls for growing plants.

LIMESTONE: A sedimentary rock consisting mostly of calcium carbonate, which often includes the organic remains of sea animals, mollusks and corals.

LOAMY: A rich, soil containing an equal mixture of sand, silt and clay.

LOBE: A roundish projection or division, as of an organ or a leaf.

MAIZE: A tall annual grass that is cultivated for its yellow edible grains, which develop on a spike. Also called Indian corn.

MUCK: A rich dark or black soil made from drained swamplands.

PLANT BREEDER: An individual who studies and practices the science of changing the traits of plants for desired results.

POISONOUS: A substance that is harmful or destructive and can cause injury or death to a person or animal by entering the body.

POLLINATED: Pollen has been transferred from a stamen to a pistil of a flower, or from a male cone to a female cone.

PRODUCTION: Total output of goods.

SANDY: Full of or covered with sand.

TEEPEE: A tent shaped like a cone.

TUBER: A short, thick, round stem that is a part of certain plants (such as the potato), that grows underground, and can produce a new plant.



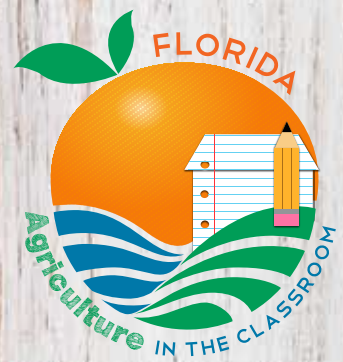


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