



The
MARYLAND
STATE FAIR

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Educating Kids about Agriculture



CORN – An amazing grain!

Did you know? All corn isn't alike. Three of the most popular kinds of corn are:

Sweet Corn

Field Corn

Popcorn

Sweet Corn is harvested when it is sweet and juicy. This is the corn you can eat right off the cob! Sweet corn is also canned and frozen to be enjoyed when it isn't being grown.



Popcorn is the only kind of corn that will pop! Moisture inside the kernel explodes when it is heated! Popcorn is a healthy snack (*without the salt and butter*) containing lots of fiber.



Let's check out one of your favorite foods grown on Maryland farms!

Field Corn isn't harvested until the stalks and the ears of corn are dry. Kernels have a *dent* in them. This corn is often used as feed for farm animals. It is also processed as oil, meal, and starch and is in many foods we eat. Many products that we don't eat are also made from field corn. Google "field corn products" and find some things containing corn that will surprise you!



Be a Corn Detective



Examine an ear of sweet corn. Can you find the *stem* end? The green part covering and protecting the kernels is called the *husk*. The *kernels* are the corn seeds. Notice the long, stringy threads. These are called *silks*. Each silk is connected to a kernel and has to be pollinated to produce the kernel. Blank spaces on the **cob** are kernels that were not pollinated. Kernels of corn are in even rows and have between 8 and 36 rows. Count yours! An ear of corn can have as many as 600-1,000 kernels. You probably don't want to count them!! A corn plant only produces 2-4 ears per plant.

Some Fun Activities to Try with Corn

Make Gloop

Materials needed:

1 ½ cups of cornstarch Dish to use for mixing
Food coloring Spoon or craft stick for stirring
½ cup water

Directions:

1. Measure 1 ½ cups of cornstarch into a bowl.
2. Measure ½ cup water into a glass.
3. Add several drops of food coloring to the water.
4. **Gradually** add the water to the cornstarch. Stir well.
5. Add small amounts of water or cornstarch until you have a mixture that separates when you pull it apart and then seems to melt back together when you leave it alone. You have made Gloop – a unique gooey substance from corn!

Make Plastic from Corn

1. Place **2 Tablespoons** cornstarch in a plastic zipper seal bag.
2. Add **4 drops** of corn oil to the cornstarch in the bag.
3. Add **2 Tablespoons** water to the corn oil and cornstarch mixture.
4. Add **1 drop** of food coloring to the mixture.
5. Carefully seal the plastic bag. **Knead** (mix) the mixture well until it forms a uniform consistency.
6. Heat the mixture in a microwave (for about 30-60 seconds). (Have an adult help you.) Let cool and it will be a solid plastic from corn!

Joke Answers

- A. A field of corn.
B. It is dressed in silk.
C. Someone stepped on his corn.

Eat Corn on a Stick

Ask an adult to break cobs into 3-inch pieces before they are cooked. Insert a wooden skewer, craft stick, or fork into the cob. Enjoy your corn on the cob without messy or hot fingers!



Go on a Scavenger Hunt!

Corn is in 1,000s of products in the grocery store. Go on a **Scavenger Hunt** in your kitchen to see if you can find 25 items that have corn in them. Read the labels of cereal, soda, cake & pudding mixes, oil, crackers, snacks, and other products. How many did you find?

CORNY JOKES

- A. What has many ears but cannot hear?
- B. Why is corn considered the most sophisticated vegetable?
- C. What made the farmer yell?