

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading Comprehension Worksheets

INDIAN CORN

Read the story below. Read aloud then answer the questions that follow.

Notes for reading: Preview the text to be read. Before you start reading, ask yourself, what does the author want me to think or feel? Do I agree with the author? While you read pay close attention to the details presented in the text.

INDIAN CORN



Few plants are more useful to man than Indian corn, or maize. No grain, except rice, is used to so great an extent as an article of food. In some countries corn is almost the only food eaten by the people.

Do you know why it is called Indian corn? It is because the American Indians were the first corn growers. Columbus found this grain widely cultivated

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading Comprehension Worksheets

by them when he discovered the New World. They pounded it in rude, stone bowls, and thus made a coarse flour, which they mixed with water and baked.

Indian corn is now the leading crop in the United States. In whatever part of this land we live, we see corn growing every year in its proper season. Yet how few can tell the most simple and important facts about its planting and its growth!

Corn, to do well, must have a rich soil and a warm climate. It is a tender plant, and is easily injured by cold weather. The seed corn does not sprout, but rots, if the ground is cold and wet. To prepare land properly for planting corn, the soil is made fine by plowing, and furrows are run across the field four feet apart each way. At every point where these furrows cross, the farmer drops from four to seven grains of seed corn. These are then covered with about two inches of earth, and thus form “hills” of corn.

In favorable weather, the tender blades push through the ground in ten days or two weeks; then the stalks mount up rapidly, and the long, streamer-like leaves unfold gracefully from day to day. Corn must be carefully cultivated while the plants are small. After they begin to shade the ground, they need but little hoeing or plowing.

The moisture and earthy matter, drawn through the roots, become sap. This passes through the stalk, and enters the leaves. There a great change takes place which results in the starting of the ears and the growth of the grain. The maize plant bears two kinds of flowers,—male and female. The two are widely separated. The male flowers are on the tassel; the fine silk threads which surround the ear, and peep out from the end of the husks, are the female flowers.

Each grain on the cob is the starting point for a thread of silk; and, unless the thread receives some particle of the dust which falls from the tassel flowers, the kernel with which it is connected will not grow. The many uses of Indian corn and its products are worthy of note. The green stalks and leaves make excellent fodder for cattle. The ripe grain is used all over the earth as food for horses, pigs, and poultry. Nothing is better for fattening stock.

Green corn, or “roasting ears,” hulled corn and hominy, New England hasty pudding, and succotash are favourite dishes with many persons. Then there are

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading Comprehension Worksheets

parched corn and popcorn—the delight of long winter evenings. Cornstarch is an important article of commerce. Syrup and sugar are made from the juice of the stalk, and oil and alcohol from the ripened grain. Corn husks are largely used for filling mattresses, and are braided into mats, baskets, and other useful articles.

Thus it will be seen how varied the uses of Indian corn are. And besides being so useful, the plant is very beautiful. The sight of a large cornfield in the latter part of summer, with all its green banners waving and its tasselled plumes nodding, is one to admire, and not to be forgotten.

DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you eat corn? How often do you eat corn?
2. What are many colours of corn?
3. What are the many by-products of the corn plant?
4. Name some dishes made with corn. What is your favourite corn dish?
5. Draw and name the parts of a corn plant.

1. How is corn flour made?

2. Complete the sentence below.

Corn is a _____.



fruit



grain



vegetable

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading Comprehension Worksheets

3. After corn is planted, when do you expect to see the blades on the ground?

4. The green stalk and leaves are food for _____.

5. What conditions does Corn need to grow well?

6. According to the passage, who discovered the New World?

7. How far apart are the furrows dug in the fields?

8. This basket is made of _____

9. Who were the first corn growers?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading Comprehension Worksheets

10. What happens to the corn seed that is thrown in ground that is cold and wet?
