

Pick-Of-The-Patch Literature

Incorporate these mouthwatering books and activities into your watermelon studies.

Down By The Bay

Written by Raffi

Illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott
Crown Books For Young Readers, 1988
Savor the rhythm and rhymes in this delightful picture-book interpretation of one of Raffi's most popular songs. Two young friends—who live down by the bay—try to one-up each other with a series of hilarious rhymes.

Did you ever see an
ape eating a grape,
down by the sea?

A reading of *Chestnut Cove* is the perfect springboard for a discussion about classroom cooperation. Ask students how they can foster cooperation in the classroom. Suggestions might include listening to everyone's ideas, taking turns, and sharing materials. Record the students' responses on a large watermelon cutout. When the cutout is filled with students' ideas, display it and the title "[teacher's name]'s Cove—A Classroom Of Cooperation" on a classroom wall.

Watermelon Day

Written by Kathi Appelt

Illustrated by Dale Gottlieb

Henry Holt And Company, Inc.; 1996
Young Jesse must endure waiting all summer for her watermelon to grow. Her pappy agrees that her watermelon will be a big one, just right for a Watermelon Day. But will that day ever come? This sweet story of anticipation is one that all your students can relate to.

After several oral readings (and singings!) of this irresistible story, invite students to create their own hilarious rhyming questions. Then have each child publish his favorite rhyme in a self-made watermelon pop-up card.

To make a watermelon pop-up card:

1. Fold in half a 9" x 12" sheet of white construction paper and round the corners at the end opposite the fold.
2. Cut two 2-inch slits in the center of the fold about 1 1/2 inches apart. Open the card and copy the chosen rhyme near the bottom of the card.
3. Illustrate the subject of the rhyme on a three-inch square of white construction paper. Cut out the illustration.
4. Pull the narrow strip in the center of the opened card forward and crease it in the opposite direction from the fold. Glue the cutout to the lower half of the strip; then illustrate the inside of the card as desired.
5. Close the card, making sure the strip stays inside.
6. Fold in half a 7" x 10" piece of red construction paper and round the corners at the end opposite the fold.
7. Partially unfold the red paper and slide the folded card inside. Glue the red paper to the white paper.
8. To complete the project, color the outer rim of the card green and draw several watermelon seeds.

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Chestnut Cove

Written & Illustrated by Tim Egan
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995

Cooperation was a way of life in the friendly town of Chestnut Cove. But when King Milford offers his entire kingdom to whosoever grows the largest, juiciest watermelon, the atmosphere of the small town slowly begins to change. Will greed and watermelons be the downfall of Chestnut Cove?

After hearing this story, there's little doubt that your youngsters will want to grow their own watermelons. Although watermelon seeds will not produce melons when grown indoors, they will yield attractive vines. Have each child label a clear plastic cup with his name, partially fill the cup with potting soil, and plant a watermelon seed in the soil. Next have each child water his seed and place his cup in a window or another sunny location. Discuss the feelings of anticipation that Jesse experienced in the story and invite students to talk about times when they have had similar feelings. Then, during the following weeks, have students water their seeds and measure the growth of their watermelon vines. If desired have students record their measurements, observations, and feelings of anticipation in watermelon-shaped journals.