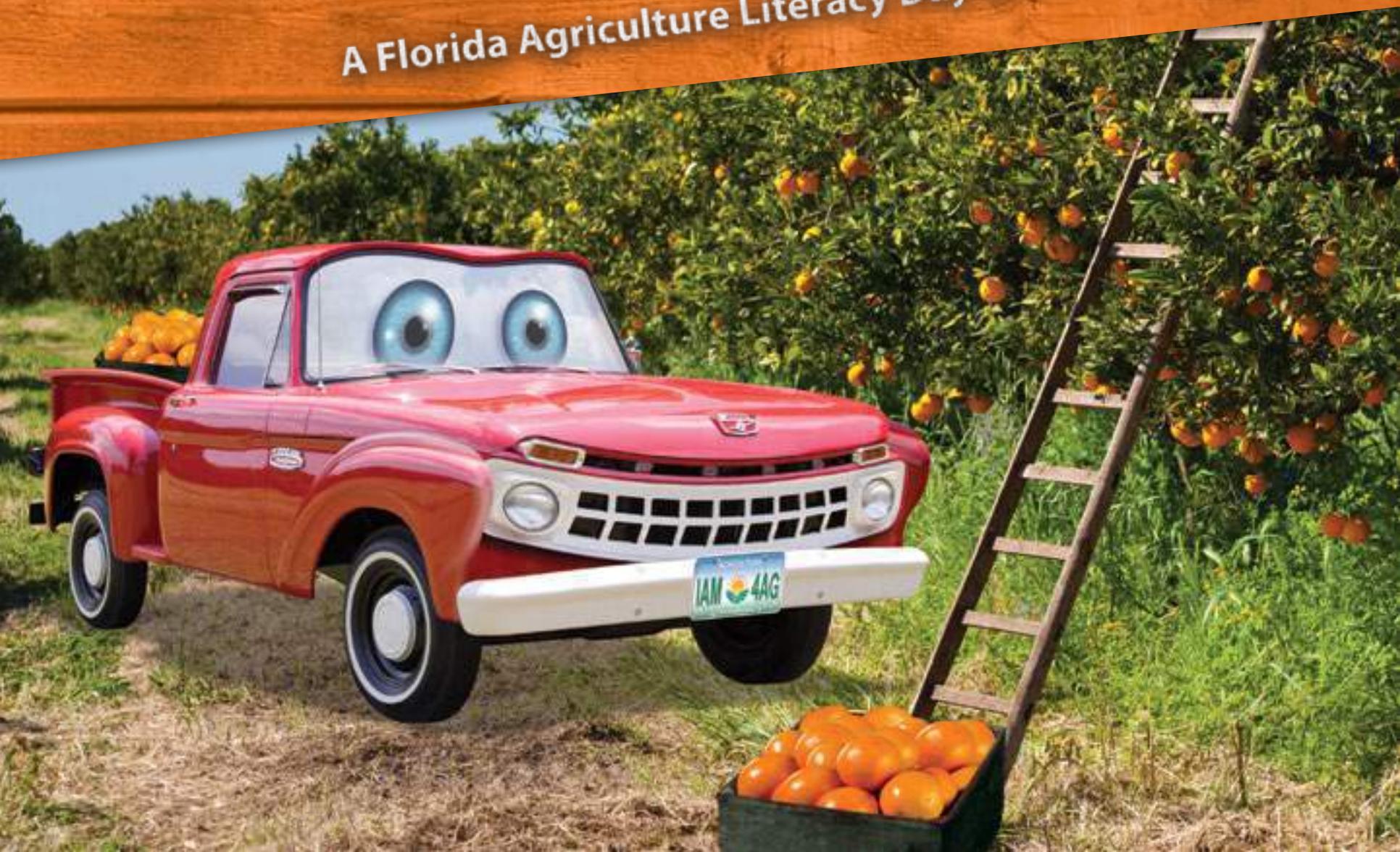




# DRIVE THROUGH FLORIDA FRUIT

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 FRUIT**

**A Florida Agriculture Literacy Day Book**

**Written by**  
Arlette Roberge

**Illustration and Design by**  
Douglas Gillespie and Mark Cason



**Florida Department of  
Agriculture and Consumer Services**

Commissioner Adam H. Putnam



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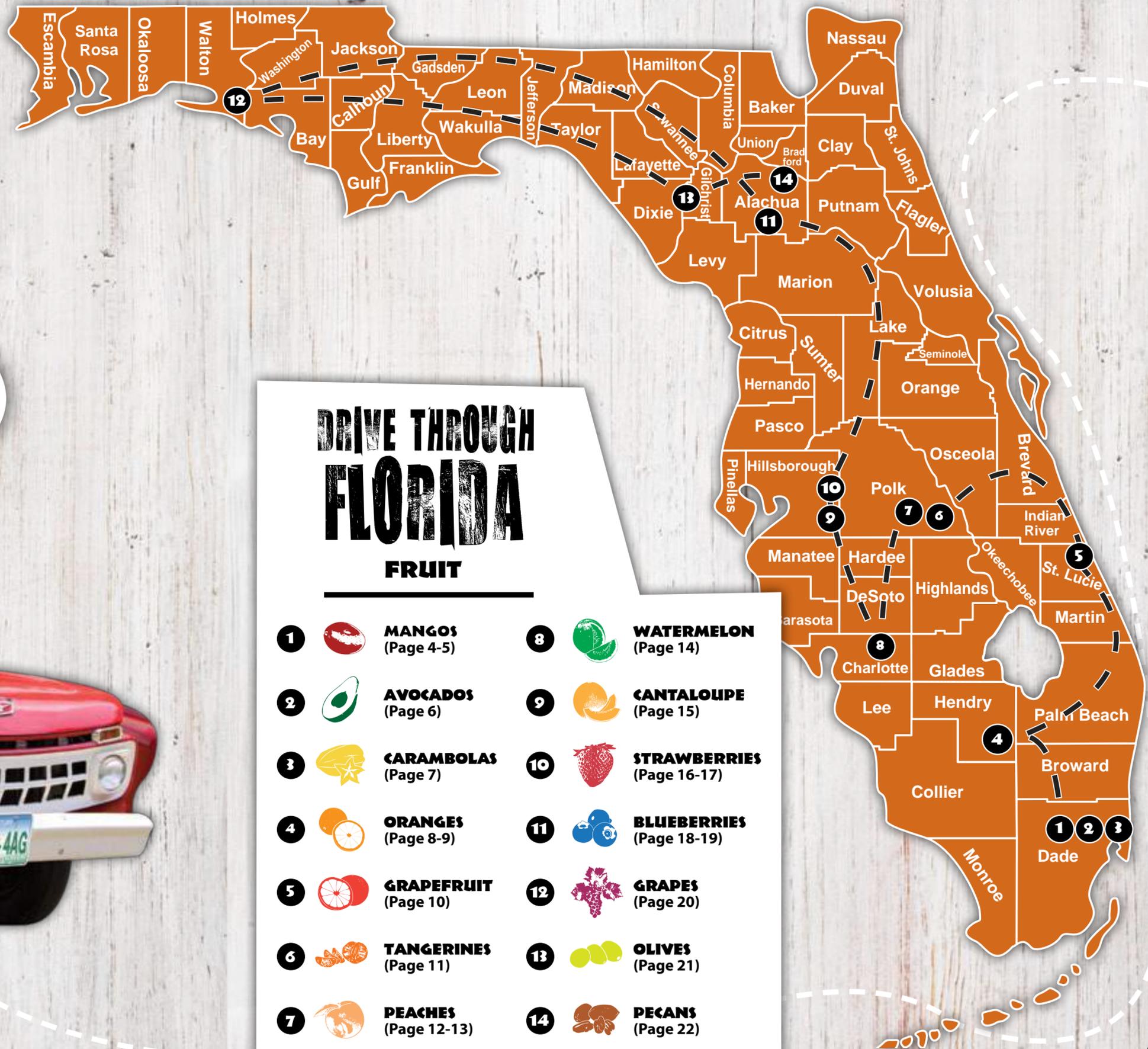
**"Educate Students About Florida Agriculture"**  
(352) 846-1391 [www.AgTag.org](http://www.AgTag.org)

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

# HELLO, FRUIT-LOVING FRIENDS

IT IS TIME FOR  
OUR NEXT  
ADVENTURE  
WITH OLE' RED.

During this trip we will visit Florida's orchards, vineyards and groves to learn about one of our favorite food groups - fruit. Ready to go? Then let's get started.



LET'S VISIT  
A WORLD OF  
TROPICAL FRUITS  
ON THE SOUTHERN  
TIP OF FLORIDA.



In the Redland area of Miami-Dade County, mangos thrive in the warmest tropical conditions.



# MANGOS

Mango trees can grow up to 100 feet tall. The fruit hangs on branches by a long stem. They look like huge red, yellow and orange Christmas tree ornaments.



**MANGO FLOWERS**



**MANGO SMOOTHIE**



**DELICIOUS MANGO**

Mangos are one of the most popular fruits in the world and one of the tastiest. They are ready to eat when soft to the touch. In Latin America, you can buy them on sticks from street vendors. Try them in salsa or in a smoothie.



**SOUTH FLORIDA MANGO FESTIVAL**

## FUN FACTS



MANGO BARK, LEAVES, SKIN AND PITS ARE USED IN FOLK REMEDIES.



MANGOS ARE RELATED TO CASHEWS AND PISTACHIOS.

MANGOS WERE FIRST GROWN IN INDIA OVER 5,000 YEARS AGO.



# AVOCADOS



Let's stay in Miami-Dade to learn about avocados and carambolas.



AVOCADO INSPECTOR



CHICKEN, AVOCADO AND SWISS PITA



MIAMI-DADE

Avocados are not giant pears, but they look like them. They can weigh up to five pounds each and grow to over a foot long! They grow on trees that can be 65 feet tall. Avocados have a nutty taste and are yummy in salads and sandwiches or as guacamole for tacos!

# CARAMBOLAS



CARAMBOLAS

Have you ever eaten a star? That's what a carambola looks like when sliced and why they are sometimes called star fruit. When this fruit is hanging on a tree it looks like a golden lantern.



STAR FRUIT



GOLDEN LANTERNS

Carambolas were brought to America from Asia and farmers have been growing them in south Florida for about 100 years. This unusual fruit would make any lunch an "all-star" meal.

# FUN FACTS



AVOCADOS HAVE **MORE PROTEIN** THAN ANY OTHER FRUIT.

AVOCADOS WERE ONCE CALLED "ALLIGATOR PEARS."



AVOCADOS WERE BROUGHT TO FLORIDA FROM THE WEST INDIES.



THE ENTIRE CARAMBOLA FRUIT IS EDIBLE: FLOWER, SKIN, FLESH AND SEEDS.

THE GOLDEN STAR CARAMBOLA WAS DEVELOPED IN HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA.



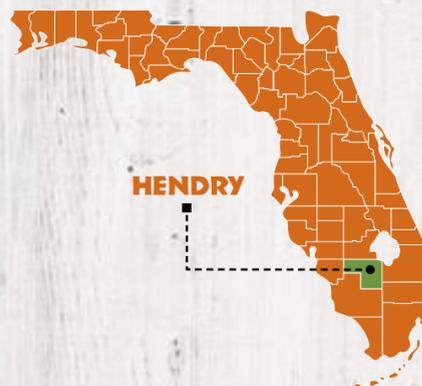
DID YOU KNOW THAT FLORIDA GROWS MORE CITRUS FRUIT THAN ANY OTHER STATE IN AMERICA?



Let's travel to Hendry County to learn about oranges.



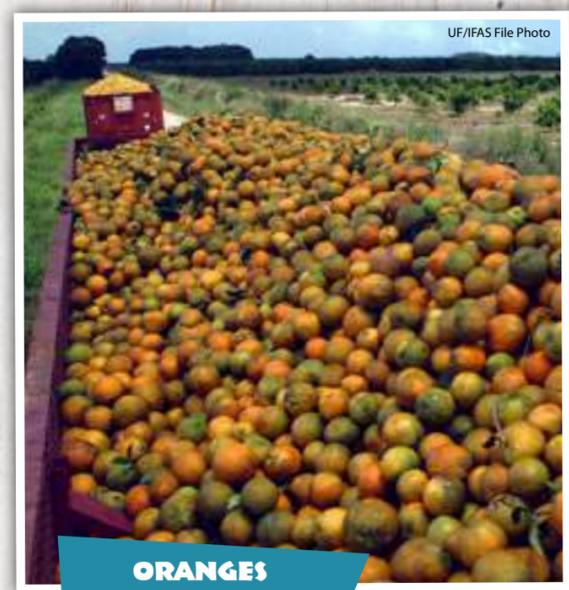
# ORANGES



Citrus fruit includes oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, lemons and limes. These fruits grow on large trees and are harvested by climbing long ladders.

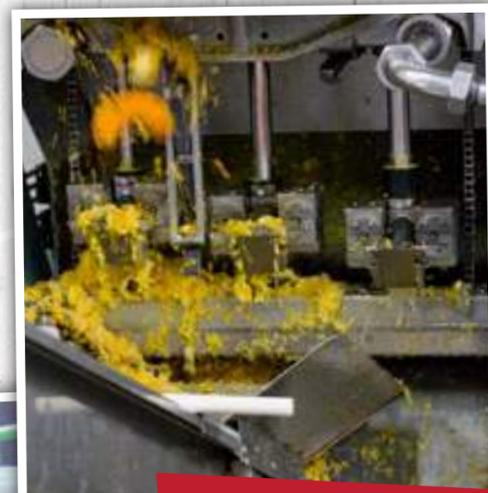


PICKING ORANGES



ORANGES READY TO SHIP

When people think of Florida, they often think of oranges. That is because we grow more oranges than any other citrus crop.



JUICING



ORANGE JUICE BOTTLING PLANT



YUMMY ORANGE JUICE

Some people think Florida oranges are juicier than other oranges. Ninety percent of our oranges are used to make orange juice.

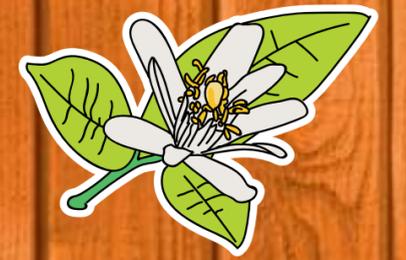


TRUCKING FRESH ORANGES

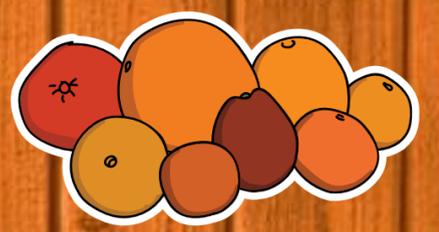
## FUN FACTS

THE ORANGE ORIGINATED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

THE ORANGE BLOSSOM IS THE STATE FLOWER.



THE ORANGE IS THE STATE FRUIT.



THERE ARE SEVERAL VARIETIES OF ORANGES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN FLAVOR.

# GRAPEFRUIT



Now, come with me to our grapefruit groves in the sandy soils of St. Lucie and Indian River Counties.



**GRAPEFRUIT JUICE**

No, these are not grapes, but they grow in clusters like grapes which is how they got their name. Grapefruit are much larger than oranges and have a sweet, tangy flavor. People all over the world know how healthy they are for you which is why so many are shipped to Europe and Asia.



**GRAPEFRUIT ON THE TREE**

# TANGERINES

Tangerines are a great snack to take with you to school because they have their own package! They are smaller than oranges, easy to peel and divided into sections. They don't make much of a mess and are so sweet to eat.



**TANGERINES**



**TANGERINES IN THE STORE**



Farmers in Polk County grow lots of tangerines; let's take a short drive to try some.



**PSYLLID**

In recent years a disease called "citrus greening" has destroyed many citrus trees in Florida. This disease is caused by a bacteria which is spread by a tiny insect called a psyllid. Scientists are working hard to find a solution for "greening" by growing trees that can fight the disease and by developing ways to kill the bacteria.

# FUN FACTS



THE FIRST GRAPEFRUIT GROVE WAS PLANTED IN 1823 NEAR TAMPA, FLORIDA.



THE WORD "TANGERINE" COMES FROM TANGIER, A SHIPPING PORT IN MOROCCO.

TANGERINES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FALL AND WINTER.



TANGERINE OIL IS USED IN MANY FOOD PRODUCTS.



UF/IFAS File Photo

# PEACHES



Let's stay in Polk County because that's where the most peaches are grown.



PEACH ORCHARD

Farmers are always searching for new crops that can grow in Florida. Scientists have helped farmers develop a peach that is just right for our warm weather.



UF/IFAS File Photo

PEACH FLOWER



BABY PEACHES



Phillip Rucks Nursery, Inc.

PEACH TREES



UF/IFAS File Photo

PEACHES AFTER A FREEZE

Florida peaches are smaller than other peaches and are very sweet, which is why they make a great snack or dessert. Peaches need a certain amount of cold weather to ripen properly. These are called "chill hours" but you can "chill" while eating peach cobbler, peach pie or just peaches and cream.



PEACH COBBLER



FFVA File Photo

PEACH PACKING PLANT

## FUN FACTS



PEACHES, LIKE NECTARINES, ARE CALLED A "STONE FRUIT" BECAUSE OF THEIR LARGE PIT.



FLORIDA HAS ABOUT 1,400 ACRES OF PEACHES.

PEACH TREES ARE THINNED EACH YEAR TO ENCOURAGE NEW BLOOMS.



FLORIDA PEACHES ARE THE FIRST TO RIPEN IN THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF OUR WARM WEATHER.





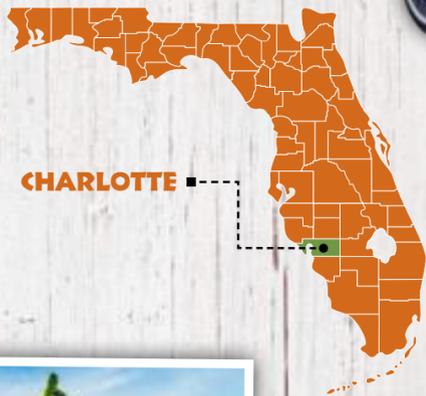
# WATERMELON



We're moving down the road to Charlotte County. Farmers here grow our largest fruit.

Douglas Gillespie

Everyone loves watermelon in the summer and thanks to Florida farmers, you can enjoy this delicious fruit all year. Here in Florida we grow winter watermelons. No other state can do this.



CHARLOTTE

Have you heard of a seedless watermelon? Actually, these melons do contain what are called "seed coats." Scientists have made sure they will not grow big and hard. Seedless or seeded, Florida watermelon cools you down when you are playing or working and tastes great at the same time.



WATERMELON



WATERMELON TASTES GREAT

# CANTALOUPE



HILLSBOROUGH



Now, let's zip to Hillsborough County and learn about cantaloupes.



CANTALOUPE IN THE FIELD

Cantaloupes, like other melons, are related to pumpkin, squash and cucumbers. They are part of the muskmelon family which is why they have a sweet, fragrant flavor. They grow on vines and need lots of room on the ground to spread out. They can weigh from one to 11 pounds. When the vine separates from the fruit, it is ready to pick! You can actually smell a cantaloupe to tell if it is ripe inside. When it smells sweet, it is ready to eat.

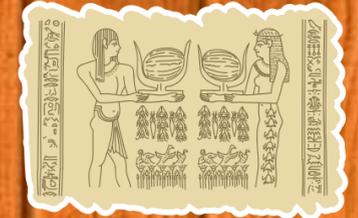


CANTALOUPE

# FUN FACTS



THE FIRST RECORDED WATERMELON HARVEST OCCURRED NEARLY 5,000 YEARS AGO IN EGYPT.



WATERMELON IS 92% WATER.



EARLY EXPLORERS USED WATERMELONS AS CANTEENS.



THERE ARE 7 WATERMELON FESTIVALS IN FLORIDA.



THE NAME CANTALOUPE COMES FROM CANTALUPO, ITALY, WHERE IT WAS GROWN IN THE 1700S.



# STRAWBERRIES



We're staying in Hillsborough County to learn about strawberries.



PREPARING FOR PLANTING



LEARNING ABOUT STRAWBERRIES



Florida farmers grow strawberries all winter long, December through April, when much of the rest of the country is covered with snow.



PICKING STRAWBERRIES

These berries are an easy-to-prepare, healthy snack; just wash and eat them. They don't even need to be refrigerated. Strawberries are the only fruit that have seeds on the outside -- lots of them!



READY FOR THE STORES



STRAWBERRIES



GREAT AT A PICNIC

## FUN FACTS



**PLANT CITY** IS THE WINTER STRAWBERRY CAPITOL OF THE WORLD.

THERE ARE 200 TINY SEEDS ON A STRAWBERRY.



THE AMERICAN COLONISTS INVENTED STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE.

STRAWBERRIES MUST BE PICKED AT FULL RIPENESS. THEY CANNOT RIPEN ONCE PICKED.





Alachua County is a great place to find blueberries. Let's go pick some.



# BLUEBERRIES

Pretty little blueberries are so healthy they are sometimes called a superfood! They are good for your eyes, hearing, and help to prevent many diseases. Blueberries grow on bushes that can reach up to six feet tall, producing fruit between March and May.



BLUEBERRY PARFAIT



BLUEBERRY BUSHES



BLUEBERRIES



SORTING BLUEBERRIES

You can buy blueberries in the grocery store or you can pick them yourself if there is a u-pick farm close by. It's lots of fun!



PICKING BLUEBERRIES

## FUN FACTS



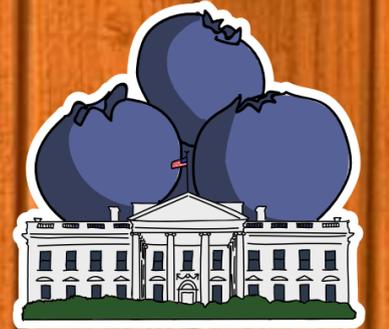
FLORIDA BLUEBERRIES ARE **HIGHBUSH** BLUEBERRIES.

LOWBUSH VARIETIES ARE WILD VARIETIES.



JULY IS NATIONAL BLUEBERRY MONTH.

BLUEBERRIES WERE ADDED TO THE WHITE HOUSE GARDEN IN 2011.



# GRAPES

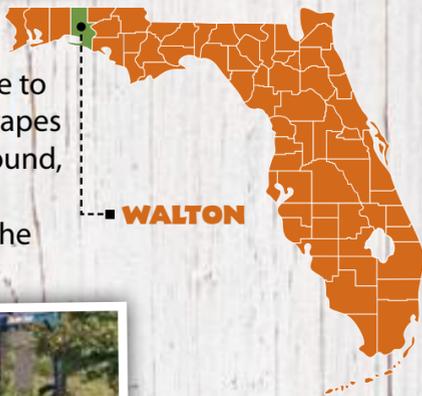


Let's drive to the panhandle of Florida where there are lots of grapes on the vine in Walton County.



UF/IFAS File Photo

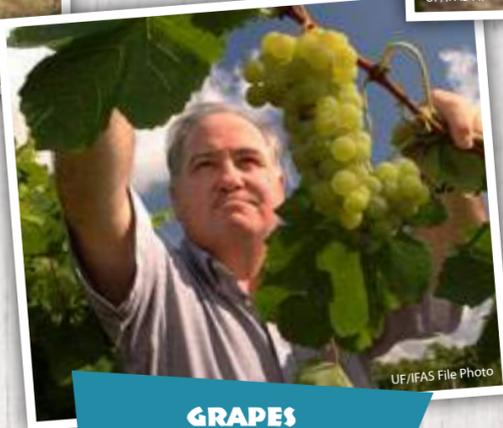
When European settlers came to the new world, they found grapes growing in the wild. These round, large grapes grew all along Florida's east coast down to the middle of the state.



HARVESTING GRAPES

UF/IFAS File Photo

The varieties we grow today are similar to these native grapes. We refer to these native grapes as Muscadines. Florida grapes are rounder, larger and thicker-skinned than those you commonly see in grocery stores, but they are delicious.



GRAPES



UF/IFAS File Photo

GRAPE TRELLISES

Grapes need trellises to wind their vines around and fertile soil to grow, but they are very tolerant of insects and diseases.

# OLIVES



GILCHRIST

Let's drive to Gilchrist County where farmers are planting olive trees.



Some farmers are trying new crops; olives are one of those new crops. Olives come from the Mediterranean and that's why you will always find olives on a Greek salad. Some areas of Florida have similar growing conditions to the Mediterranean: sandy soil, lots of sun and ample rain.



OLIVES



OLIVES AT THE MILL



OLIVE OIL

Florida Olive Farms

Olives aren't eaten fresh; they need to be cured first. Olives are a new crop to Florida and farmers have a lot to learn, but so far, so good for our olive crop. Florida even has two new olive mills. The olives are pressed to squeeze out their oil in the olive mills. Olive oil is used for cooking, so let's harvest those olives!

# FUN FACTS



SCIPPERNONG IS A TYPE OF THE MUSCADINE GRAPE. IT COMES IN A VARIETY OF COLORS.

FLORIDA GRAPES ARE USED TO MAKE JELLIES AND WINES OR CAN BE EATEN FRESH.



AMERICANS USE 80 MILLION GALLONS OF OLIVE OIL EACH YEAR.



THE FIRST OLIVE TREES MAY HAVE BEEN PLANTED IN PENSACOLA BY SPANISH SETTLERS.



# FUN FACTS



PECANS ARE NATIVE TO THE UNITED STATES.

FLORIDA GROWS ABOUT 8,500 ACRES OF PECAN TREES.

IN THE 1700S, PECANS WERE USED FOR BARTER BY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS AND FUR TRADERS.



We'll end our trip in Alachua County where lots of pecans are grown.

# PECANS



UF/IFAS File Photo

PECANS ON THE TREE



UF/IFAS File Photo

PECANS



PECAN PIE

Pecans grow best in North Florida where it gets cold. Pecan trees grow more than 70 feet tall and need plenty of space between trees (about 60 feet). These trees are deciduous which means they drop all their leaves during the winter. A pecan tree does not produce nuts until it is at least six years old. That's a long time to wait for a pecan pie.



# SO LONG!

Well, we have traveled our state from south to north to learn all about Florida's fruit. As you can see, it is so easy to eat. You can enjoy fruit for breakfast, snacks, desserts and so much more. Be sure to look for "Fresh From Florida" fruit at your school, at the local u-pick and in grocery stores. Happy eating!

# NUTRITION AND AVAILABILITY

|  |                     |  |   |
|--|---------------------|--|---|
|    | <b>AVOCADOS</b>     | Folate, magnesium, potassium, vitamin E          | July - January                            |
|    | <b>BLUEBERRIES</b>  | Manganese, vitamins C and K                      | April - May                               |
|    | <b>CARAMBOLAS</b>   | Copper, fiber, vitamin C                         | July - April                              |
|    | <b>CANTALOUPE</b>   | Potassium, vitamins A and C                      | April - June                              |
|    | <b>GRAPEFRUIT</b>   | Fiber, vitamins A (colored varieties only) and C | September - May                           |
|    | <b>GRAPES</b>       | Fiber, iron, manganese                           | July - September                          |
|   | <b>MANGOS</b>       | Vitamins A, B6 and C                             | May - August                              |
|  | <b>ORANGES</b>      | Fiber, thiamin, vitamin C                        | September - May                           |
|  | <b>OLIVES</b>       | Fiber, iron, omega-3 fatty acids                 | September - October (not available fresh) |
|  | <b>PEACHES</b>      | Fiber, vitamins A and C                          | April - May                               |
|  | <b>PECANS</b>       | Fiber, manganese, thiamin                        | October - November                        |
|  | <b>STRAWBERRIES</b> | Fiber, folate, vitamins A and C                  | December - April                          |
|  | <b>TANGERINES</b>   | Fiber, vitamins A and C                          | September - May                           |
|  | <b>WATERMELON</b>   | Lycopene, vitamins A and C                       | April - July                              |



# DEFINITIONS

**BACTERIA:** A group of very small, usually one-celled living things that often cause disease.

**CURED:** To process or preserve by various methods such as salting, drying, smoking, aging or fermentation.

**DECIDUOUS:** Having leaves that fall off every year at a particular season.

**GROVE:** A small group of trees that often produce fruit or nuts.

**MEDITERRANEAN:** Of or relating to the Mediterranean Sea or to the lands that surround it.

**NATIVE:** A plant originally grown in a particular place or country.

**OLIVE MILL:** A machine that grinds olives and makes them into paste to remove oil.

**ORCHARD:** A place where people grow fruit trees.

**ORNAMENT:** A small, fancy object that is put on something else to make it look better.

**PSYLLID:** A small insect that lives on plant juices and can be a pest of fruits and vegetables.

**TRELLIS:** A frame with long pieces of wood that cross each other that is used as a support for climbing plants.

**U-PICK:** A type of a farm that allow visitors to hand-pick their own fresh fruits and vegetables.

**VINEYARD:** A field where grapes are grown.

