Activity

4

Where does food come from?

One of the brilliant things about the planting that you’re doing as part of the Fruit-full Communities Project is that you will be growing food that you can eat right on your own doorstep. It will be totally fresh and it won’t have travelled any miles at all to get to you.

Apples grow really well in this country, but two thirds of all the apples we eat come from other countries. Often they are transported thousands of miles from countries such as New Zealand or USA. So it is great that you will be growing some in your own orchard.

Hopefully you have chosen some of the rarer varieties of apples that grow well in your area to plant in your orchard. There are so many different varieties with different tastes - it would be a shame if they were lost.
Have you ever thought about where your other food comes from? And I don’t just mean does it come from Aldi or Morrisons! Have a look at the labels on the food next time you’re out shopping and you’ll see that it comes from countries all across the world. This is just one of the many ways in which we’re connected with other people living in all corners of the globe.

Why not have a go on this food miles calculator? [www.foodmiles.com](http://www.foodmiles.com) You can put in the names of the countries from the labels on your food and it will work out how far it has travelled.
Where does food come from?

Transporting food over long distances can have a big impact on the environment. This is particularly so if they are transported by plane as this produces large quantities of CO2 high up in the atmosphere where it has most impact on global warming. Delicate fruits such as blackberries are commonly imported from Mexico in this way. If you can find them growing in the hedgerows you will be helping the planet as well as saving yourself some money.

Bananas are transported large distances, but because they are picked when they are green they can be brought slowly by ship as they ripen. This has far less impact on the environment, and few get wasted because they are still firm while they are transported.

If you want to minimise your impact on the environment it is good to try and buy food from local producers when you can. But it is important to think about the seasons too. If you buy strawberries that have been grown in the UK in January, they are likely to have been grown in heated greenhouses, which releases far more CO2 than if they had been brought by truck from a warmer country.

Find out more about the carbon footprint of anything you can think of in this great book by Mike Berners-Lee How Bad are Bananas? The carbon footprint of everything.
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Of course, growing food for export can be a very important way for people in other countries to bring in some income, but it can be a problem if the result is less good land to grow food for local people to eat. And the benefits may only go to a few wealthy landowners rather than being shared with ordinary people. One way to help improve the deal for local people is to buy Fairtrade products – look out for the special logo. You can find out more about this on the website www.fairtrade.org.uk

Chocolate is something we take for granted in this country, but the cocoa beans to make it have to be grown in much hotter countries. Most of our cocoa is grown in Ivory Coast in Africa. This YouTube video is of cocoa farmers in Ivory Coast who have grown cocoa all their lives but never eaten chocolate. Next time you eat some chocolate, you might want to think about who grew the cocoa beans! bit.ly/1tmJv1k

Many people are trying to grow food more locally to provide people with alternatives to supermarket shopping. Take a look at this video from Growing Communities in London for some inspiration bit.ly/2nLBWEs.

Why not find out if there is anything like this going on in your area?
**Food from around the Globe**

This activity will get you thinking about where food comes from and the impact it has on the environment and local communities. You can try it on your own or in a group.

**You will need:** Set of printed cards, cut up and shuffled

Print off and cut up the squares from the table below and shuffle them – one set for each group.

Match the name of the food with the photo of it growing and the explanation of where it grows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Grow well in the UK</th>
<th>About 66% imported from other countries such as New Zealand (11,600 miles) and USA (4,400 miles)</th>
<th>Fewer traditional English varieties now being eaten</th>
<th>Grow in tropical climates</th>
<th>Mostly imported from Spain (800 miles) and USA (4,300 miles)</th>
<th>Need a warm climate</th>
<th>Mostly imported from China (5,000 miles), India (4,100 miles), Sri Lanka (5,300 miles) and Kenya (4,200 miles)</th>
<th>Grows in tropical and sub-tropical climates</th>
<th>Mostly imported from Brazil (5,700 miles), Vietnam (6,200 miles) and Colombia (5,300 miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
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<td>Bananas</td>
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<td>Oranges</td>
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<td>Coffee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Activity 4**

**Where does food come from?**

**Things to think about:**

- How much of the food we consume is grown in other countries around the world?
- The large distances food is transported and different modes of transport – bananas brought by ship from the Caribbean and oranges brought by truck from Spain result in far fewer CO2 emissions than blackberries brought by plane from Mexico.
- Seasonal and local food – strawberries grown in a heated greenhouse in the UK will result in higher emissions than those brought by truck from southern Europe, but if they are in season and local that is the best of all.
- Fresh food that has been grown locally will be packed full of vitamins and so will have health benefits as well as environmental ones.
- There are lots of delicious varieties of apples that people don't eat much any more because the supermarkets sell mainly imported varieties.
- The value of growing food for export to create employment and bring income versus the value of growing food for local consumption in countries where people may not get enough to eat. How much do local people really benefit?
- This links to the idea of growing food locally in the orchard you are planning - growing your own fruit and veg can save money as well as being healthy and good for the planet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sugar</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cocoa</strong></th>
<th><strong>Blackberries</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strawberries</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pineapple</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Produced from two very different plants</td>
<td>• Grows in tropical climates</td>
<td>• Grow well in the UK</td>
<td>• Grow well in the UK</td>
<td>• Grow in tropical climates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One can grow in the UK and other parts of Europe (20% of world production). The other in tropical climates (80% of world production)</td>
<td>• Cote d’Ivoire (4,300 miles), Ghana (4,100 miles) and Indonesia (7,200 miles) are the biggest growers</td>
<td>• Can be picked for free from hedgerows</td>
<td>• In season in June and July if grown outdoors</td>
<td>• Most are grown in the Philippines (6,700 miles), Thailand (5,800 miles) and Costa Rica (5,400 miles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>