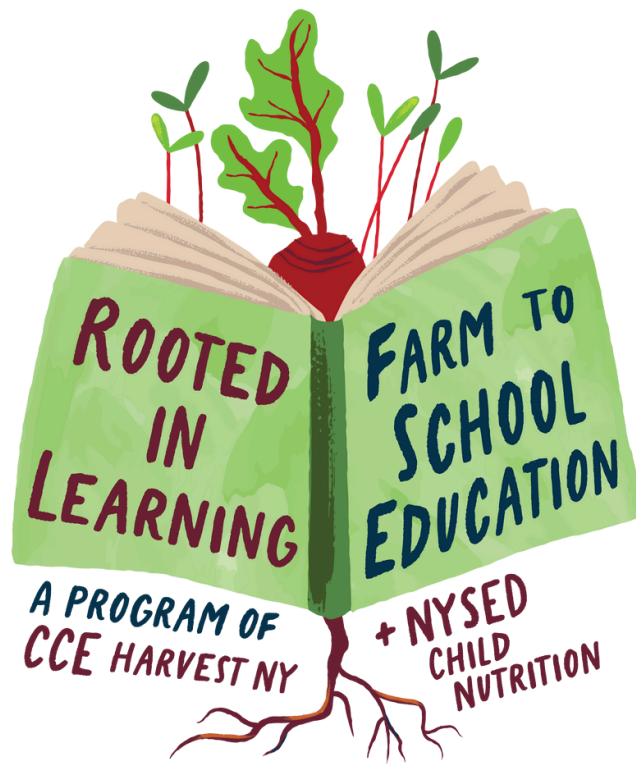


# HARVEST OF THE MONTH GUIDE



*This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.*

# MAKING THE MOST OF THIS GUIDE

Welcome to the Harvest of the Month Resource Guide! We're excited to share this Harvest of the Month (HOM) Resource Guide, designed to help bring New York-grown fruits, vegetables, and other seasonal ingredients to life in your classrooms, cafeterias, and beyond. Whether you're an educator, food service professional, or school garden coordinator, this guide is packed with ready-to-use tools and ideas to support hands-on learning and seasonal celebration.

**Each featured harvest includes:**

## LESSON PLANS

Engaging, standard-aligned lessons for various grade levels that connect agriculture, science, literacy, and nutrition from National Agriculture in the Classroom.

## FUN FACTS

Use these bite-sized facts in creative ways—build a Jeopardy-style game, have students design posters, or display them on cafeteria screens. However you use them, they're a great way to get students thinking about how and where their food is grown.

## CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Enjoy direct links to Harvest of the Month-aligned recipes from the [NY School Food Cookbook](#) to help bring these ingredients to the plate in fun, delicious, and kid-approved ways.

We hope this guide helps build stronger connections between students and the food they eat, while supporting a culture of healthy eating and local food appreciation in your school community. Let's dig in!



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# GRAPES

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Freshest Fruits

Fruits of our labor

## BOOKS

First Day in Grapes

How Do You Raise a Raisin?

PB&J Hooray!

## CAFETERIA

- Taste Test Idea: Red vs. green comparison, have students vote on their favorite
- Use a Fun Fact and create a sign to hang
- Sampling Idea: Grape Salad skewers with different colored grapes

## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

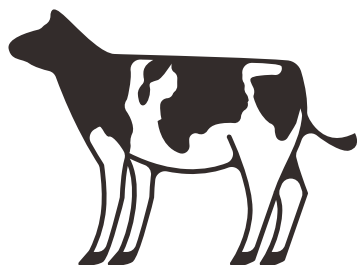


Youtube: Grape Harvest  
Virtual Field Trip 2021

## FUN FACTS

*Grapes grow through the summer adding sugar and size*

- The Lake Erie region is the oldest growing region in the world for Concord grapes. This region is second in Concord production in the United States
- The Finger Lakes region is known for growing world-renowned wine grapes and the production of award-winning wines
- Grapes grow in a large group called a "bunch" or cluster. Depending on the variety, a bunch can be made up of 15 to 300 grapes. One vine in a vineyard will be around 40 bunches per vine
- There are over 10,000 varieties of grapes in the world today. With less than 100 varieties growing on a larger portion of vineyards
- When a vineyard is planted, it takes vines on average up to three years to produce grapes.
- Grapes grow through the summer adding sugar and size
- Harvest of grapes starts in August and runs into October depending on the variety and use of the grape



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# DAIRY

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Animals on the Farm

Milk or Meat? Beef or Dairy?

Milk, Sugar, Science: Engineering Ice Cream

### GRADES 3-5

FoodMASTER: Fats and Oils

FoodMASTER: Milk and Cheese

Cowabunga! All About Dairy Breeds

The Ultimate Efficient Recycler

Pizza Time!

A Day Without Dairy

### GRADES 6-8

Food MASTER Middle: Yogurt

Science You Can Eat

Food Scientist for a Day

### GRADES 9-12

Milk: The Scoop on Chemical and Physical Changes

## BOOKS

Chuck's Ice Cream Wish

Ice Cream Everywhere

It's Milking Time

The Milk Makers

## CAFETERIA

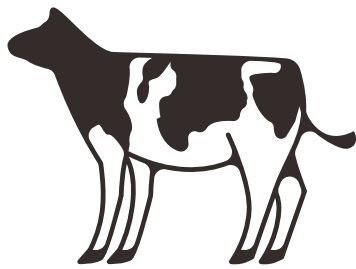


Mac & Cheese Sauce



Ranch Dressing





## HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# DAIRY

### FUN FACTS

New York is the fourth largest producer of milk in the United States

- There are 6 main breeds of dairy cattle
- Cows are milked two to three times a day
- New York is the fourth largest producer of milk in the United States
- New York is one of the top producers of sour cream and cottage cheese in the nation
- Straight from the cow, milk is about 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- After the milk is collected, it is quickly cooled in large stainless-steel storage tanks, where it waits to be collected by a large, cooled tanker truck
- Ice cream is a processed frozen dairy product
- Ice cream is made of milk, sugar, and cream

### VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS



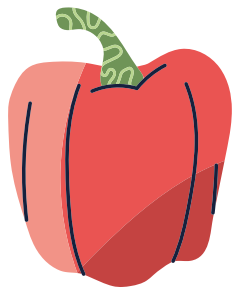
[Youtube: Milking - Cow to Cone Virtual Field Trip - June 2021](#)



[Youtube: Nutrition & Health Cow to Cone Virtual Field Trip - May 2021](#)



[Youtube: Calves - Virtual Field Trip Cow to Cone Series - May 2021](#)



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# PEPPERS

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Plant Tops and Bottom

### GRADES 3-5

Preserving the Powerful Pepper

### GRADES 6-8

Knee Deep in Green Peppers

### GRADES 9-12

Chili Peppers

## CAFETERIA



Creamy Cilantro Bean Salad

## FUN FACTS

There are nearly 200 different varieties of bell peppers!

- One serving of bell peppers is an excellent source of Vitamin A and C
- There are nearly 200 different varieties of bell peppers!
- Bell peppers are warm-season crops
- It takes up to 180 days until the final harvest
- Peppers come in all different colors, shapes and sizes
- The heat in hot peppers comes from a compound called capsaicin
- Sweet and chili peppers are the same species of plant called *capsicum annuum*
- Many varieties of peppers thrive on full sun and warm weather which can make growing peppers in New York tricky



## HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# HONEY

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

The Amazing Honeybee

### GRADES 3-5

Honeybees: Pollination Simulation

### GRADES 6-8

Mind Your Own Beeswax

### GRADES 9-12

Fermentation of Honey

Preservation Power of Honey

## BOOKS

Beekeepers

Flight of the honeybee

Henry Meets A Honeybee

The Honeybee Man

## CAFETERIA



Honey Cornbread



## HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# HONEY

## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP



Youtube: **Pollination and Honey**  
**Virtual Field Trip - June 2021**

## FUN FACTS

Honey has different tastes  
depending on the time of year

- Not all bees produce honey
- When the weather is warm, bees are active and collecting pollen and nectar from flowering plants
- A person who manages hives and collects honey is called an apiarist
- Honey has different tastes depending on the time of year
- Each type of plant produces a different type of nectar, which creates a different flavor of honey
- Farmers in New York depend on bees to help pollinate many crops
- Europeans brought honeybees to North American around the 17th century



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# MAPLE SYRUP

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

From Sap to Syrup

### GRADES 3-5

Pancakes!

Sweet Sugaring

### GRADES 9-12

Maple Economics

## BOOKS

At Grandpa's Sugarbush

Maple from the Sugarhouse

The Sweetest Season

## CAFETERIA



Cinnamon Maple Swirl Sheet-Pancake



Maple Balsamic Brussels Sprouts



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# MAPLE SYRUP

## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

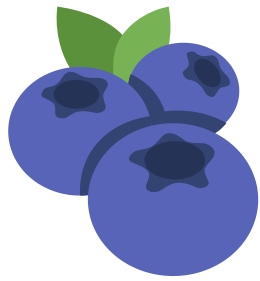


Youtube: Virtual Field Trip to Uihlein  
Research Forest - February 2021

## FUN FACTS

For sap to flow, nights must be below freezing and days above freezing

- Maple syrup is a product made from the sap of maple trees
- Maple production happens in the late winter and early spring
- To harvest sap, sugar makers drill small holes in a tree and insert taps
- New York ranks number two in maple production in the US
- It is estimated that New York has the largest maple tree stock in the world and could become the leading producer globally
- Temperature is the main factor in maple production
- For sap to flow, nights must be below freezing and days above freezing



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# BERRIES

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Freshest Fruit

Eating Plants

### GRADES 3-5

Bunches of Berries

### GRADES 6-8

DNA: Expressions in Agriculture

### GRADES 9-12

Strawberry Breeding and Genetics

## BOOKS

Blueberries for Sal

I Love Strawberries

Spring is for Strawberries

Berry Song

## CAFETERIA



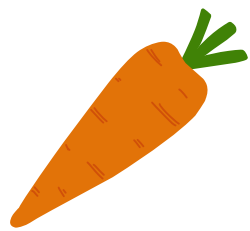
Blueberry Crumb Muffin

## FUN FACTS

Blueberries are one of the only truly blue foods

- The most common berries to be grown in New York State are strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries
- Blueberries are one of the only truly blue foods
- Every strawberry, no matter the size, has around 200 seeds
- New York is the fourth-largest producer of fresh strawberries
- On average, New York State produces 2 million pounds of blueberries annually
- Raspberries are loaded with dietary fiber, vitamin C, and manganese





HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# ROOT VEGETABLES

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Dig Em Up

### GRADES 3-5

Vegetables: Tops and Bottoms

Beets

### GRADES 6-8

"Ugly" Carrots Might Be the Answer

## BOOKS

Carrots Grow Underground

## CAFETERIA



Roasted Honey Carrots

## FUN FACTS

Beets can be used to make sugar and for food coloring

- Root vegetables include beets, carrots and parsnips
- Carrots can come in a variety of shapes and colors
- Carrots are an excellent source of vitamin A which is important for the health of our eyes and immune system
- Beets can be used to make sugar and for food coloring
- Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Washington are the largest parsnip-growing states in the United States
- The starch in parsnips change to sugar after the first frost when the vegetable is still in the ground, giving it it's unique sweet flavor





HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# CABBAGE

## BOOKS

Katie's Cabbage

Oliver's Vegetables

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table

## CAFETERIA



Lime Cilantro Slaw

## FUN FACTS

New York State ranks second in fresh cabbage production

- New York State ranks second in cabbage production
- After eighty days cabbage will reach full maturity
- Cabbage is a cold hardy plant and does not do well in warm temperatures



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# WINTER SQUASH

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Storing Winter Squash

Pumpkins... Not Just for Halloween

The Case of the Missing Pumpkin:

### GRADES 3-5

Three Sister Garden

### GRADES 6-8

Squash and the Colonization of Food

Cultural Traditions and Health

### GRADES 9-12

Everyone Has a Food Story

Squash and the Colonization of Food

## BOOKS

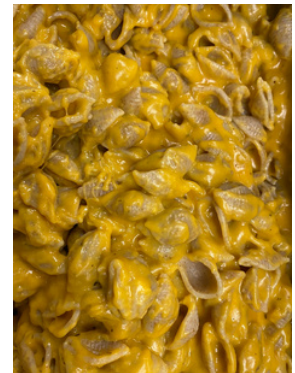
In The Three Sisters Garden

Sophie's Squash

From Seed to Pumpkin

Pumpkin Pumpkin

## CAFETERIA

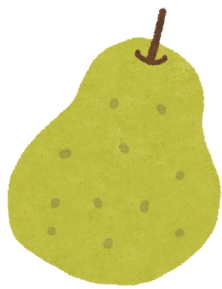


Butternut Squash  
Mac and Cheese

## FUN FACTS

Squashes were originally harvested for the consumption of their seeds only

- Squashes were originally harvested for the consumption of their seeds only
- Squashes are a member of the Cucurbitaceae family, also known as the gourd family
- The word squash comes from the Wampanoag word 'askutasquash' which translates to "eaten raw or uncooked"
- Winter squash got their name because they store well during long, cold winters
- Nearly every part of the squash plant is edible—leaves, flowers, seeds and fruit!
- Common types of winter squash are acron, butternut, hubbard, pumpkin and spaghetti squash



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# PEARS

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES 3-5

Tree-mendous Fruits

## BOOKS

The Fruits We Eat

A Fruit Is A Suitcase For Seeds

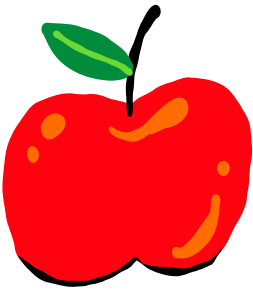
## CAFETERIA

- Taste Test Idea: Sliced fresh pears with a sprinkle of cinnamon
- Cafeteria Display: Show different pear varieties (Bartlett, Bosc, Anjou) with a "Which pear is your favorite?" voting box
- Sampling idea: Pear & cheese snack cups (pear slices with cubed cheddar)

## FUN FACTS

There are more than 3,000 varieties of pears

- There are more than 3,000 varieties of pears
- Pears ripen from the inside out
- Pears ripen best when they're off the tree
- Pear trees can live up to 100 years



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# APPLES

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES 3-5

A is for Apples

Apple Science: Comparing Apples and Onions

### GRADES 6-8

FoodMASTER Fruits

Apple Genetics: A Tasty Phenomena

### GRADES 9-12

Apples and the Science of Genetic Selection

## BOOKS

An Apple Tree Through The Year

Apples

From Apple Trees to Cider, Please!

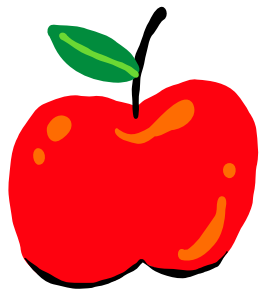
How do Apples Grow?

Johnny Appleseed

## CAFETERIA



Wheatberry Salad with Apple



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# APPLES

## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

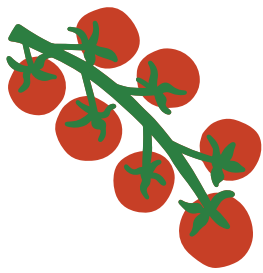


Youtube: **LynOaken Apple Harvest**  
**Virtual Field Trip - October 2021**

## FUN FACTS

*New York produces an average  
of 29.5 million bushels annually*

- New York is the second-largest apple producer in the country
- New York produces an average of 29.5 million bushels annually
- Apple trees start producing leaves and blossoms in late spring after being dormant all winter
- Apples mature throughout the summer, adding size and sugar before being harvested in early fall
- Once picked apples can stay fresh for a couple of weeks if not stored in a cool place
- Apples can stay fresh for months if stored in cool storage
- There are six major apple growing regions in New York



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# TOMATOES

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Tomato Trivia

### GRADES 3-5

Pizza Time!

## BOOKS

Pizza: A Slice of History

A True Book: Tomatoes

## CAFETERIA

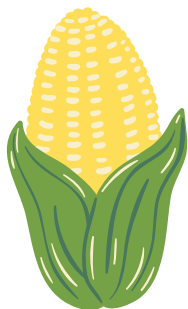


Marinara

## FUN FACTS

Scientifically tomatoes are considered a fruit

- Processed tomatoes have thicker skin than market tomatoes
- Scientifically tomatoes are considered a fruit
- There are more than 2,750 varieties of tomatoes



## HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# CORN

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES 3-5

Corn an A-maizing Plant: Food, Fuel, and plastic

Get Popping!

Inherited Traits in the Living Corn Necklace

### GRADES 6-8

Inherited Traits in the Living Corn Necklace

### GRADES 9-12

Evaluating Perspectives About GMOs

Food Evolution

## BOOKS

### Corn

Four Seasons of Corn:

A Winnebago Tradition

Let's Pop, Pop, Popcorn!

My Family's Corn Farm

## CAFETERIA

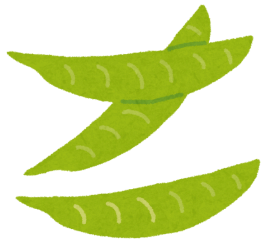


Elote Salad

## FUN FACTS

Maize or corn is a grass  
not a vegetable

- Maize or corn is considered a grass
- Corn is found in over 4,000 products
- Corn can be grown in many different climates
- Corn is a starch-rich food providing sustenance for people and livestock
- There are different kinds of corn: field corn which is used in animal feed, sweet corn which is commonly found at a summer picnic, popcorn which are dried kernels and then when heated the outer shell pops off, flint corn which is commonly used for decoration



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# BEANS

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Bean Seed Cycle

### GRADES 3-5

Magic Beans and Giant Plants

Three Sisters Garden

Beed Seed Fun Activity

Get Growing

Peas in a Pod

## BOOKS

The Amazing Lifecycle of Plants

A Seed is Sleepy

## CAFETERIA



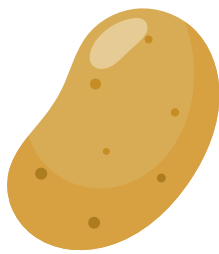
Black Bean Enchilagna

## FUN FACTS

NYS is the second largest producer of snapbeans in the United States

- Beans are part of the legume family
- They originally came from South and Central America
- Beans are a good source of potassium which is important for heart health
- Beans are also high in iron which is vital for your blood to transport oxygen throughout your body
- NYS is the second largest producer of snapbeans in the United States
- 99% of the peas processed in NYS get canned or frozen





HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# POTATOES

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Potatoes: More Than Fries

### GRADES 3-5

Where Does it Come From?

Powerful Potato

### GRADES 6-8

Microbes: They're Everywhere

### GRADES 9-12

Before the Plates

## BOOKS

The Life of a Potato

Potatoes for Pirate Pearl

George Crum and the Saratoga Chip

Mr. Crum's Potato Predicament

## CAFETERIA

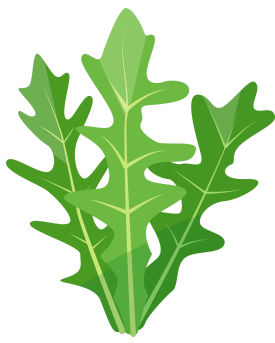


Roasted Potato Wedge

## FUN FACTS

If a potato doesn't get eaten, it will start to send shoots or 'eyes' on the potato

- Potatoes originally grew in South America
- While most plants are harvested for their seeds, fruits or stalks, potatoes are harvested for their stems that grow under the soil
- If a potato doesn't get eaten, it will start to send shoots or 'eyes' on the potato
- Salt potatoes are a common and historic Central New York summertime staple
- Potatoes can be harvested around 50 days, are considered new potatoes and are processed quickly
- Storage potatoes are harvested between 70 and 100 days



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# SALAD GREENS

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

A Taste of Leafy Greens

Luscious Leaves

Plant Tops and Bottoms

Lettuce Exploration

### GRADES 6-8

Eat Your Greens

### GRADES 9-12

Eat Your Greens

## BOOKS

A Green, Green Garden

Eating the Alphabet

## CAFETERIA

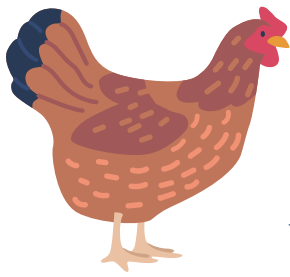


Kale Caesar Salad

## FUN FACTS

Spinach typically takes 21-50 days to grow

- There are many kinds of greens which all vary in taste and texture
- Popular greens are kale, spinach, collards and romaine lettuce
- There are three varieties of spinach: Smooth leaf, Savoy and Red Veined
- Spinach typically takes 21-50 days to grow
- There are three varieties of lettuce: head, leaf and romaine



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# ANIMAL PROTEINS

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES K-2

Animals on the Farm

Milk or Meat? Beef or Dairy?

Eggology

Eggs: From Hen to Home

From Chicken Little to Chicken Big

### GRADES 3-5

Beef Basics

Roll of the Genes

Eggology

Eggs: From Hen to Home

From Chicken Little to Chicken Big

Right This Very Minute

### GRADES 6-8

The Remarkable Ruminant

Eggs on the Menu

Hen House Engineering

### GRADES 9-12

Hen House Engineering

A Tale of Two Burgers: Beef and Plant-based Protein

Beef: Making the Grade

## BOOKS

'Til the Cows Come Home

The Girl Who Thought in Pictures

A Chicken Followed me Home!

Chickens on the Farm

Right This Very Minute

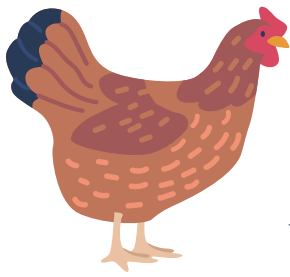
## CAFETERIA



Sloppy Joe



Teriyaki Chicken



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# ANIMAL PROTEINS

## FUN FACTS

on average, hens can produce 300 eggs a year

- When a beef animal is born, it is first called a calf. As they grow, female cows are called heifers until they have their first baby and are then called cows
- Beef is the second most consumed protein in the US
- Beef cattle are bred to be muscularly dense and are often shorter and stockier than dairy cattle
- Chickens usually lay one egg a day
- It takes a chicken twenty-six hours to lay its next egg
- On average, hens can produce 300 eggs a year

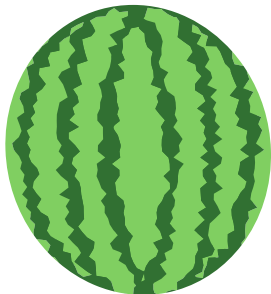
## VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS



Youtube: **Beef Virtual Field Trip - May 2021**



Youtube: **How to Develop a Dish with Chef Cruz**



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

# MELONS

## LESSON PLANS

### GRADES 3-5

#### Melon Madness Activities

### GRADES 9-12

#### Melons, Mitosis and Meiosis

## CAFETERIA

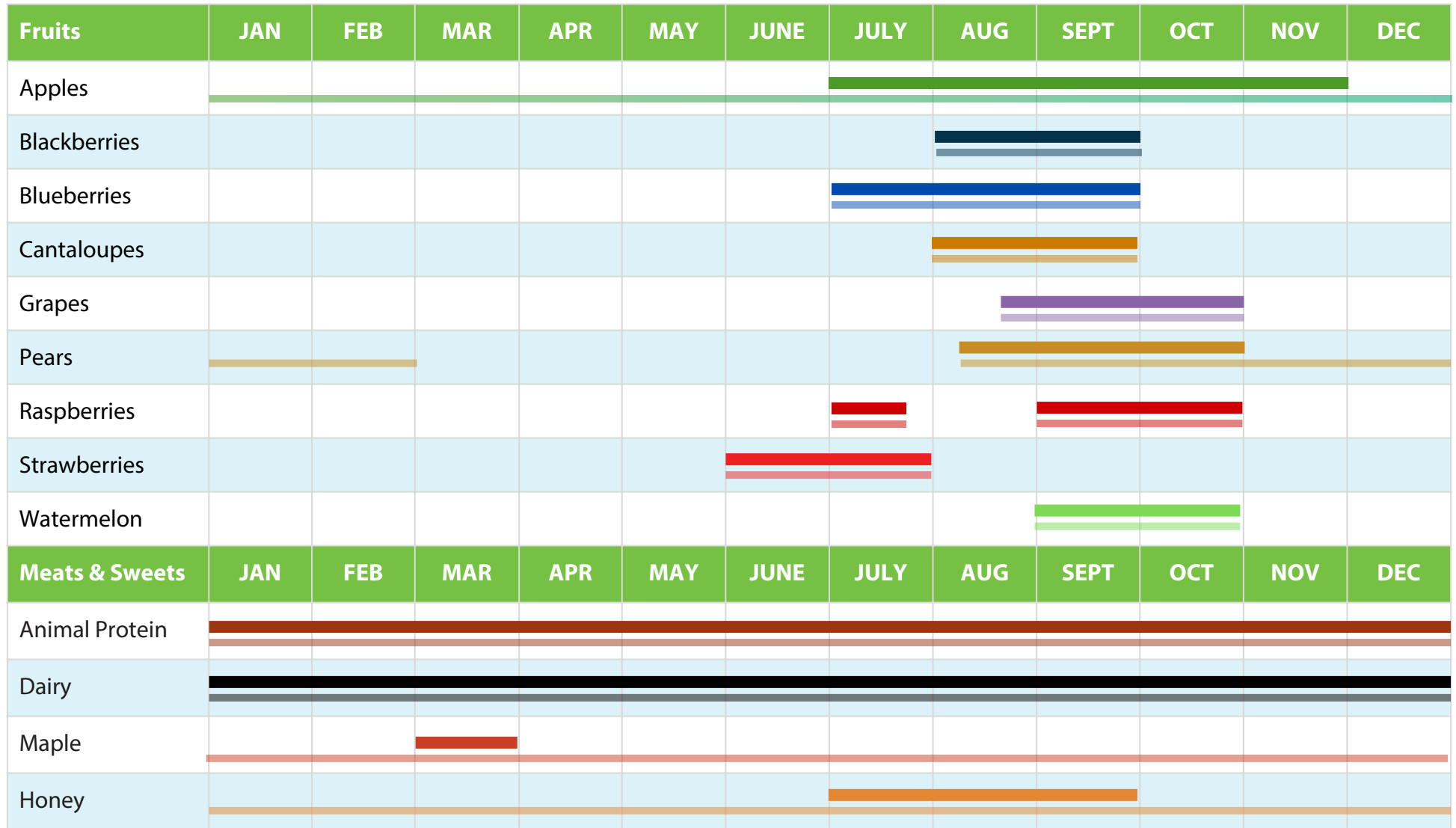
- Taste Test Idea: Have a melon sampling station offering different types of melons (honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon)
- Cafeteria display: A poster showing how watermelons are grown, with a “Guess how many seeds are in this watermelon?” activity jar
- Sampling Idea: Watermelon salsa with diced watermelon, lime juice, and a little mint (served with whole-grain tortilla chips)

## FUN FACTS

Watermelon is 92% water

- Cantaloupe, watermelon and honeydew are the most commonly grown melons in NYS
- Cantaloupe is the most common type of melon to be grown in NYS. But you can also find honeydew and watermelon
- Watermelon is 92% water
- Watermelon is like a natural sports drink – it is rich in electrolytes which we lose when we sweat
- Because watermelons are so fragile, they cannot be harvested by machine. Instead they are picked by hand
- It takes a cantaloupe 3-4 months to grow before they are mature enough to be harvested



# NEW YORK'S HARVEST AVAILABILITY CALENDAR



 Harvest Period  
 Availability Period

# NEW YORK'S HARVEST AVAILABILITY CALENDER

Vegetables	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Beans, Dry												
Beans, Lima												
Beans, Snap												
Beets												
Cabbage												
Carrots												
Corn												
Kale												
Lettuce												
Peppers												
Potatoes												
Spinach												
Squash, Winter												
Tomatoes												

 Harvest Period  
 Availability Period