

THE OLDEST PEAR TREE

Grades 2-5 | 1 Class Period



OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will explore where pears come from and how they are grown. They will be able to retell the main idea and important details from the story, [The Very Oldest Pear Tree](#), and understand that the Endicott pear tree is a real, living tree with historical significance that has been cared for and protected over time.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are some ways that seeds travel?
- How would you feel if you planted a tree that lasted hundreds of years?
- Why do trees and other natural resources have historical significance and need protection?
- What do trees need to live and grow?

MA STATE FRAMEWORKS

Nutrition and Balanced Eating [3.1.NE]

4. Describe how cultivation, trade routes, and regions affect food supply, and how food production affects nutrition-related decisions.

MATERIALS

- [The Very Oldest Pear Tree](#) by Nancy I. Sanders
- Pear or photo of a pear
- Photo of The Endicott Pear Tree in Danvers, MA

PROCEDURE

Warm Up

What is a pear?

Show students a real pear or a photo and ask them:

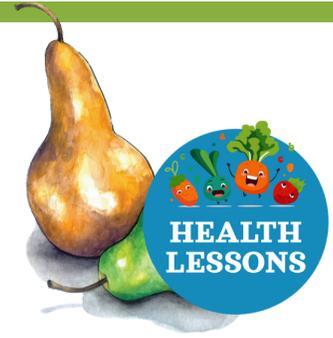
- Have you ever eaten a pear?
- What did it taste like? Smell like? How would you describe the flavor?
- Do you think pears grow in cold places? Hot places? Why?

Tell students that pears grow best in mild, cool climates. Use a world map or globe to locate China and tell students that pears were first grown in China over 3,000 years ago. Pears were brought to North America by European settlers who carried pear seeds on ships. Today's top pear-growing regions are the United States (especially Oregon & Washington), Argentina, Italy, and China.

THE OLDEST PEAR TREE

Page 2

PROCEDURE, Cont.



Main Activity

For this activity, the class will read and discuss the book The Very Oldest Pear Tree by Nancy I. Sanders.

Book Overview

The first pear tree in the United States was planted by a Puritan settler from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630s. More than a century later, the tree still bore fruit. The tree survived hurricanes, fire, and vandalism. Today, more than 350 years after it was planted, it is alive and strong in Danvers, MA, and is protected by an iron fence. Clones of this tree grow all around the United States.

Read The Very Oldest Pear Tree aloud to the class. Pause occasionally to ask questions such as:

- What do you think will happen next?
- Why do you think this tree is special?
- How would you feel if you planted a tree that lasted hundreds of years?
- Who planted the Endicott pear tree and why?
- What happened to the tree over the years?
- Why do you think people take care of it today?

EXTENSIONS & VARIATIONS

Have students take some time to learn more about pears with these handouts from Agriculture in the Classroom.

- Pear Information Sheet (<https://bit.ly/4kRT852>)
- Tree Fruits Flowchart (<https://bit.ly/3ZFpBTI>)

Students can go online to learn about the Endicott Pear tree in Danvers, MA.