

Opening Circle:

We start out in one large opening circle and the farmers introduce our program theme: “Springtime is a busy buzzing season, for farmers and their nature friends!” We set the stage for being observers and making connections between what all living things need in order to survive. We emphasize the seasonality of nature’s cycles, where food comes from and how it grows, and the farm as a habitat for some very important living things. After learning the farm rules, we divide into smaller groups (keeping about a 12:1 student to farmer ratio) and begin our Farm Adventure!

Farm Secrets:

1. Watch where your feet go! We can walk on grass, straw, woodchips, and in-between the rows in the Kids’ Farm. It’s difficult for baby plants to grow when feet are on them, so please walk only where plants are not growing (except for grass!).
2. Please wait to be invited before picking and eating anything. Some things aren’t ready to be picked and some plants aren’t people food at all- the farmers know where the good stuff is.
3. When it is time to pick and eat, please use two hands: hold the stem with one hand and pick what you want to eat with the other—that way we don’t rip up the whole plant. (Hold & pick it)
4. *For chaperones/teachers:* Thank you so much for supporting your students today! We ask that you help them follow the 3 farm secrets while exploring. Please save your advanced farm & gardening questions for the end of the tour and if you hear us asking something that seems a little simple, it’s probably a question for our younger learners! Please be prepared to help them explore the farm safely and respectfully throughout the entire Adventure.

Spring Farm Adventure at a glance, stations descriptions:

In the Kids’ Farm field:

Activity: Students will discover and taste early season crops growing in the fields. Walking through the rows, we’ll observe and taste a rainbow of food growing.

Theme: “Eat a rainbow to help you grow!”

Activity: Students will find animals hiding in and around the farm fields and observe early season native pollinators.

Theme: “Wild animals are helpers around the farm.”

In the Kids’ Clubhouse:

Activity: Students will make newspaper pots and plant sunflower seeds to take home.

Theme: “A plant has needs like you and me.”

Activity: Students play a game to match seed images within the same plant families and then compare those seeds to seedlings and adult plants in the garden, discussing how plants in the same family have

Suggestions for chaperones/teachers:

-Help students make and share observations with sensory questions (what do you hear/feel/smell...)

-Help students quietly observe any animals they might find. Ask a farmer before touching/picking up animals

-Help students find proper materials for pot making and guide/help them as they make it and plant their seed; help place pots in tray

-Help students gently & thoughtfully interact with felt board, ask students about similarities and differences they notice between seeds, as well as themselves and their own parents/siblings/relatives

similar traits that farmers can select for.

Theme: "Plants have families, too!"

In the Living Playground:

Activity: Students explore worm tower compost system, comparing it a worm habitat in nature. They can search for other worms and worm habitats on the Kids' Farm; students will feed the plants with worm compost and 2nd grade and up will learn about Oxbow's compost experiment station.

Theme: "Happy worms help farmers grow healthy plants." Or "Compost is like recycling for plant nutrients."

In the Bean Arena:

Activity: Students will plant seeds in the soil and share family traditions, learning how some special seeds have been saved for generations.

Theme: "Saving seed is a tradition practiced at Oxbow and beyond"

-Help students safely hold worms; for nervous kids, let them just observe or pet a worm while you hold it

-Help students explore and identify worm home features (food, bedding, etc.) in the bin and around the Living Playground

-Help ensure proper planting depth for seeds and safe planting practices, ask about other experiences they've had planting seeds

-Ask students about their family traditions related to cooking & sharing food, or growing plants

Oxbow supports new science standards

On-farm or garden-based environmental education is an excellent platform for exploring Life Sciences through hands-on activities and guided inquiry. During an Oxbow Spring Farm Adventure, students make observations, ask questions, and use evidence to communicate their findings.

NGSS Core Disciplinary Ideas introduced:

Structures and Processes: Students learn about the parts of plants and how those structures function to help the organisms grow and survive. Students review the life cycle of a plant, making observations to find signs of spring.

Inheritance of Traits: Students make observations and discuss the similarities between young plants, seeds, and the adult plants in those plant families.

Cycles of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems: Exploring the worm bin and our farm compost, students will make observations about how decomposers help return plant material back to the environment. Students will dig in and find other soil helpers, learning the important role of healthy soil on the farm.

Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Students will share their understanding about how plants need animals, and discuss the early season pollinators emerging in the springtime to find food from flowers. Students will visit flowers and contribute to a discussion about how farmers can attract pollinators to their farm fields and why.

Spring Farm Adventures at a glance



**Several early elementary NGSS performance expectations are supported through our programming—
contact us if you would like more information!**