

Field Trip Tips



We hope you can take a class trip to an apple orchard. The following tips will help your tour go smoothly and will stretch the value of the time you spend "in the field." The grower tips come from farmers experienced in hosting tours, and the teacher tips are provided by a second grade teacher who has taken her class to orchards many times.

We encourage you to go to the orchard on your own before you bring the whole class. Introduce yourself, pick up relevant information, and try to watch another class having the tour if possible.

Orchard Tips for Teachers

What are you going to see?

A working fruit orchard where apples are raised for distribution and sale; how the fruit is harvested, how apples are carefully handled through grading and packing before selling, how the fruit is stored for optimum quality.

What do you need to do before going?

Call the orchard to make a reservation and ask if there is a fee. Request teaching materials they may have to aid in preparation. Begin your apple unit one week ahead, and plan to continue it at least one week after the visit. Prepare your class and yourself for inclement weather and field conditions. Orchards are usually located on hillsides and have cool breezes and wet morning grasses. Don't forget bee kits if you have students who are allergic. Plan on about an hour for the complete tour. Inquire about places to eat lunch or snacks.

What do you do when you arrive?

Find the orchard tour guide and let them know how you have prepared the students. The tour may include some of the following: 1). A walk or ride in the orchard. 2). An explanation of the growing process. 3). Viewing (if possible) of the harvest, handling, and storage techniques. 4). A chance to pick your own apple (supervised). 5). Explanation or viewing of cider making. 6). A visit to the orchard store and discussion of market.

Please remember:

An apple orchard is a busy place! While your orchard hosts have made a commitment to teaching children about apples, this is not their primary job. Please be active in the control of your class and careful in the selection of your chaperons. Orchards are full of equipment and workers who are rushing to get the crop harvested and stored. To assure your safety and quality of experience, your orchard hosts have planned a route and presentation within this busy context. There may be other schools or classes nearby who are in a different part of their tour. Please help your students to experience the beauty of the orchard and to recognize that it is not a playground.

Classroom Tips for Teachers

Field Trip Focus Papers

Pre-visit classroom activities and discussions will stimulate curiosity and questions that children can research answers to at the orchard. Find out whether there will be an opportunity for an interview with an “apple expert.” Even if this time cannot be structured into the field trip, a focus paper with space for observations and sketches provides students of any age with a sense of purpose and direction. The information gathered will also be a springboard for follow-up discussion and activities.

Each child can have his/her own clipboard, or they can work in pairs or small groups. If the children need help recording information, a chaperon can be assigned to that responsibility.

Pre-Visit Preparation Ideas

Discuss and make charts related to these questions:

- What do we already know about apples and apple orchards?
- What do we predict we'll see at the orchard?
- What do we wonder about orchards?

Brainstorm a list of questions that might be asked at the orchard. In order to help the children think of the questions, give them categories and record their ideas under separate headings. Example: Jobs, People, Machines, Trees, Seasons. Or make up the charts by question words--who, what, when, where, why?

Post-Visit Follow-up Ideas

- Make individual or class books.
- Make a *Jeopardy* type game with the information everyone has gathered.
- Make up a quiz to give parents, or another class, or the chaperons.
- Have an apple tasting parents night.
- Make a mural of the orchard based on sketches.
- Write letters or make phone calls to learn answers to further questions.
- Plan an “off-season” visit to the orchard to see what is different.
- Make a model of the packing house out of blocks or *Legos*.
- Make a maze using a tractor going through the orchard, or an apple finding its way from orchard to lunch box.

Wisconsin Apple Growers Association

www.waga.org