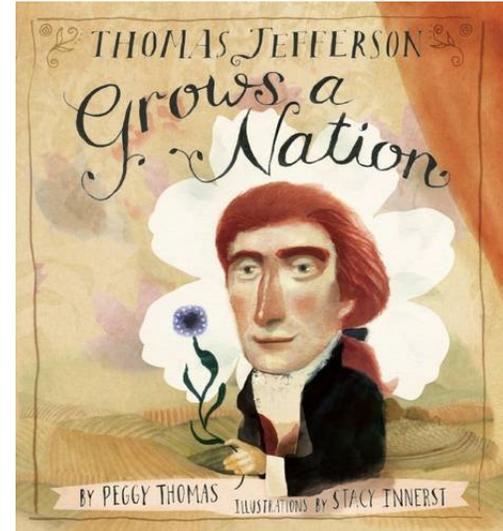


**November 2016 Book of the Month**  
*Thomas Jefferson Grows a Nation*  
**By: Peggy Thomas**

Many people know Thomas Jefferson as the third president of the United States of America, but he was a major influence in the cultivation of many plants we grow in our gardens today. Jefferson was also an advocate for science, liberty, and played a role in our nation's expansion for the west. He trialed many plants at his homestead, Monticello. Much of our knowledge of plant hardiness we owe to Mr. Jefferson because of his desire to learn how plants grow, and his introduction of plants to our Southeastern climate. Thomas Jefferson was not only a Founding Father, he was a farmer too! <sup>1</sup>



**Fun Facts:**

- Thomas Jefferson invented one of the first prototypes for a plow, which he called a “moldboard.” <sup>1</sup>
- Jefferson cultivated 250 varieties of vegetables in the Monticello Gardens. <sup>2</sup>
- Jefferson cultivated a variety of peas in the Monticello vegetable garden, including fifteen varieties of English peas. <sup>3</sup>
- The town of Jefferson, North Carolina was the first town in the country to be named after Thomas Jefferson. <sup>4</sup>
- Jefferson's early plan for North Carolina was olive oil production. He had hoped olive oil would be a great source of revenue for our state. Unfortunately, North Carolina's climate was not best suited for olive trees. <sup>1</sup>

**Activities**

**Crop Origins**

Research the top three commodities in your county. Where else in the state are these commodities produced? Have the students explore the origins of each commodity. Did it originate in the USA? Did it originate overseas; if so, how did it get here? Hang a map of the world in the class, and allow students to pin point where each commodity originated. Then, using string, trace the path to North Carolina.

**Garden in a Glove <sup>5</sup>**

Each student will need:

- 1 clear plastic glove
- 5 wet cotton balls
- 5 types of seeds (examples: lettuce, carrot, cucumber, tomato, and broccoli).

Place 3-4 seeds of the same type on each cotton ball, and place one cotton ball in each finger of the glove. Blow up the plastic glove and close the glove with a twist tie. Tape the glove to a window, chalkboard or wall, or hang with string and clothespins. The seeds will germinate in 3-5 days. Students can keep a plant diary to record the changes of the seeds. The students can also observe the changes under a microscope. Transplant the seeds after about 2 weeks by cutting the tips of the fingers off the glove. Plant the cotton ball/plantlets into a fertile potting soil.

### Designing Seed Packets <sup>6</sup>

Gather an assortment of seed packets for the students to examine. Help the students determine what information is necessary on the seed packets (Planting instructions, hardiness, spacing, growth, etc.). Use the [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#) to determine which zone you're in. <sup>7</sup> Ask the students, "What zone does this plant grow best in? How deep should these seeds be planted? How many days will it take the seed to germinate?" The students should also examine the information that the seed packet provides regarding the plant's size, and color. Assign each student a plant (preferably one that you have not studied). Students will research their plant and design a seed packet. They should include all of the information they deemed necessary for consumers who will plant the seeds.

### Links:

- American Farm Bureau School Garden Ag Mag  
<https://www.dmsfulfillment.com/FarmBureau/DMSStore/Product/ProductDetail/24764>
- Monticello's Gardener talks TJ, Peas, and School Gardens  
<http://www.agfoundation.org/news/monticellos-curator-of-gardens-writes-of-school-gardens-peas-thomas-jeffers>

### Sources:

1. Thomas, Peggy. *Thomas Jefferson Grows A Nation*. Honesdale: Calkins Creek, 2015. Print.
2. <http://porterbriggs.com/10-interesting-facts-about-thomas-jefferson/>
3. <http://www.agfoundation.org/news/monticellos-curator-of-gardens-writes-of-school-gardens-peas-thomas-jeffers>
4. <http://www.townofjefferson.org/history-of-jefferson-north-carolina.html>
5. <http://agintheclassroom.org/TeacherResources/Lesson%20Booklets/Jefferson%20Grows%20a%20Nation%20Final.pdf>
6. American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. *First Peas to the Table Educator's Guide*. Washington, DC: AFBF, 2015. Print.
7. <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>