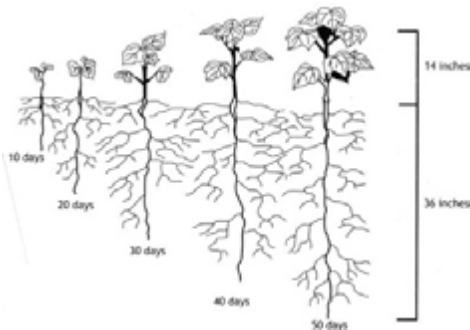




Cotton

Gossypium



Planting

Plant 5/5-5/15

(Guidelines for planting in raised beds)

Seeds: Pull individual seeds out of cotton bolls. Cotton bolls have 10-20 seeds per boll. Sow seeds in rows spaced 8-12" apart and thin plants to stand 12-15" apart in each rows, which allows the plant room to grow.

Care

Seeds: Water regularly with a gentle spray. Keep the soil moist, so that the seeds will germinate.

Young seedlings: Water when top 1 inch of soil dries out. Mulch the plants with cotton burr compost to keep soil moist.

Harvest & Storage

Cotton begins as a blossom that looks similar to a rose. After the blossom opens, the petals will turn yellow and fall off the plant. A hard, green boll will be left. Slowly, the boll will open and the cotton will be revealed. Harvest the cotton by pinching the stem above the fiber. Multiple yields will grow on the cotton plant.

Cotton is a fun crop to grow in a schoolyard garden. Beyond its beauty as a flower and a plant, there are a lot of lessons to learn about the history of cotton and its importance as a crop.

Eli Whitney invented the first modern cotton gin in 1793, and this greatly expanded U.S. cotton production. Cotton is a textile used today for clothing, bedding, even money.

Three years of cotton production produces over 1 billion pairs of jeans! Cotton is also used to produce cotton seed oil, which is found in many foods sold in the U.S.

The cotton harvested from the garden can be used for a variety of classroom art projects and lessons.



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