Tinkering for Tots

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Little learners get hands on, minds on at Tinkering for Tots, a program designed for curious preschoolers to develop an innovative mindset and make connections through storytelling, play, artifact exploration and a take-home STEAM activity kit.

What connections are we making?

Highlighted Habit

STAY CURIOUS

Description: Keep asking questions such as how and why, ask how you can help solve a problem, what is a new way to do something?

Story

Title: *Miguel's Community Garden*
Author: JaNay Brown-Wood

Why we picked this book: This book gives wonderful descriptions of various plants that might be grown in a garden. It gives our little learners great examples of practicing comparing and contrasting.

Artifact Spotlight

Name: Microscope used by George Washington Carver

Location: *Agriculture* exhibit

To learn more about the story behind this artifact, please see the artifact spotlight on Page 2.

Open Exploration

Description: Exploring with light tables.

Skills your young learner is practicing: Curiosity, trying new things by exploring with light and magnets.

Questions to Ask Your Young Learner

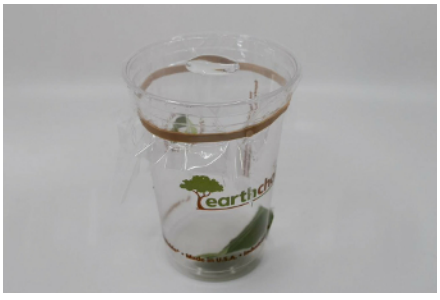
What were some of the fruits and vegetables Miguel found in the garden? What were the characteristics of the sunflower? What are your favorite fruits and vegetables?
What was something new you tried at the light tables? Did you see something that was new?

Take-Home Activity

Title: Microscopes

Materials:

- Plastic cup
- Cellophane or plastic wrap
- Rubber band
- Water
- Things to look at
- *Scissors not included*



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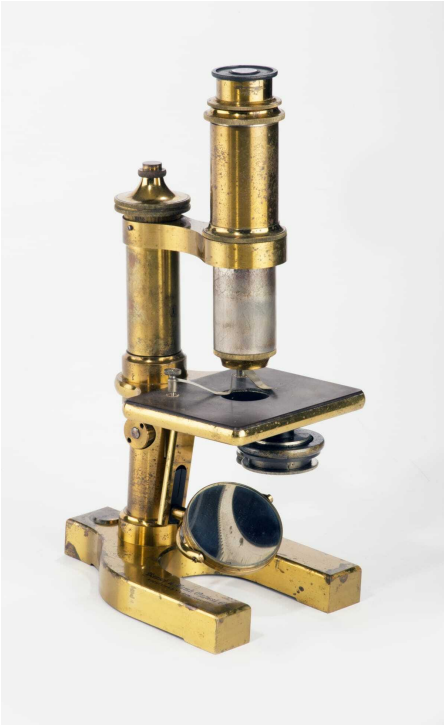
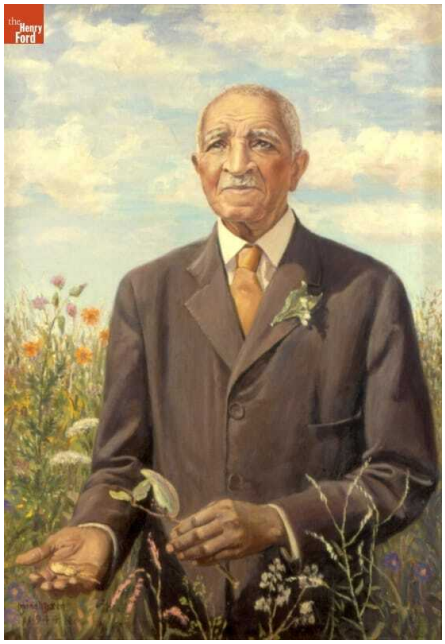
Artifact Spotlight

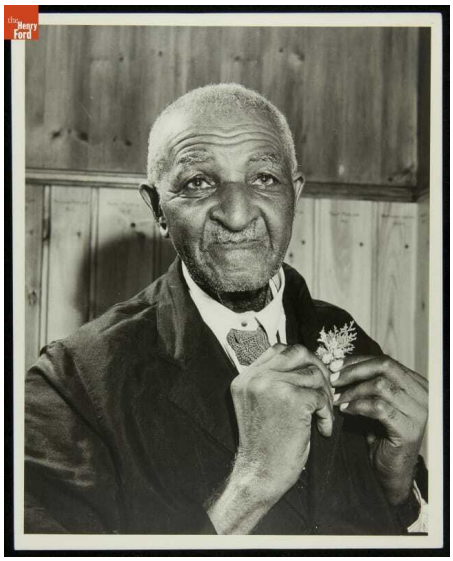


George Washington Carver's Microscope: This early 20th-century microscope belonged to George Washington Carver (1864-1943), an innovative farming, soil, and plant scientist. He wanted to improve soil worn out from planting the same crop all the time, so farmers could grow more food to eat and sell to help their families.

The microscope was used for examining the smallest parts of plants and soils. Carver used it to look at plants from fields and woods, plus peanuts and other legumes (like peas and beans) to see how he could create more products that could be sold from these crops. Carver devoted his work to helping farmers in the South recover from planting just cotton, which had taken minerals out of the soil. Carver mostly developed new crops, and products made from these new crops. He put all of his new knowledge into how-to pamphlets, sharing ways that families improve their own health by growing nutritious foods, and improve the health of their soil by putting nutrients back into it. Carver's pamphlets also introduced hundreds of new uses for materials made from plants and ways to cook and preserve foods.



He discovered over 100 uses for the sweet potato, including candy, laundry starch, dye, and flour. He developed over 300 products from peanuts, such as rubber, paper, ink, lubricants, fertilizer, bleach, 30 different dyes, wood stains, face cream, cough syrup, a milk substitute, and flour. He received three patents for processes using the peanut in making colors for paints and makeup. He put together hundreds of recipes for the peanut, even using his peanut milk to make cheese and ice cream. He even found ways to use parts of plants that were normally discarded, such as making briquettes from peanut shells.



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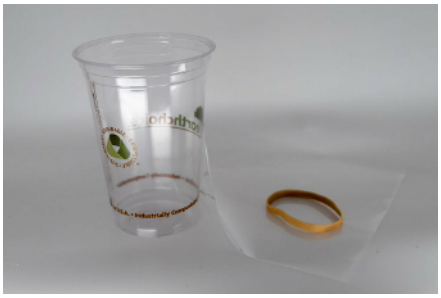
Take-Home Activity



Microscope Materials:

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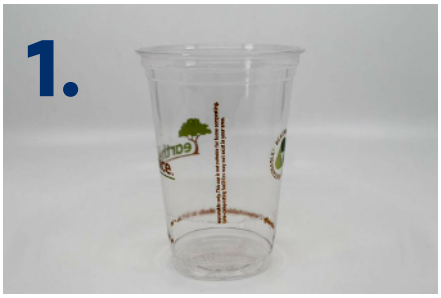

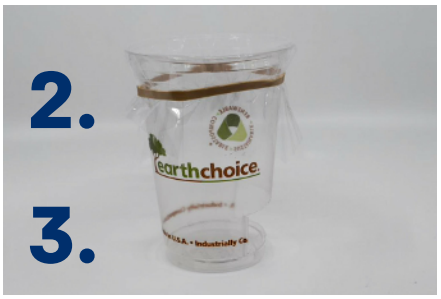

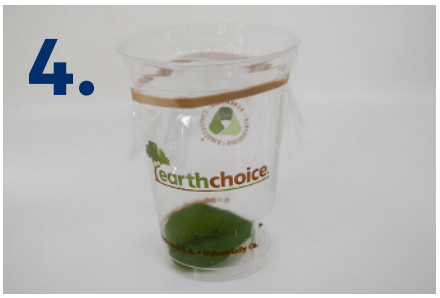

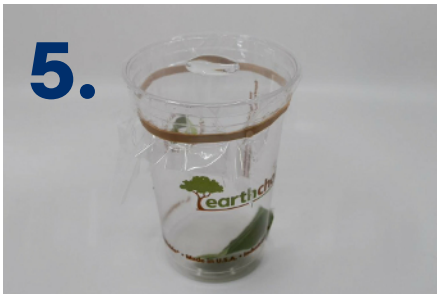

Directions:

1. Use scissors to cut a rectangular slot in the side of the cup near the bottom. This is the slot to put your specimens through to look at.

2. Stretch the piece of cellophane over the top of the cup.

3. Put the rubber band around the top of the cup to hold the cellophane in place.

4. Find a specimen to put into the bottom of the cup through the slot.

5. Put a small amount of water on top of the cellophane, creating a small pool of water.

6. Look at your specimen through the pool of water.

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Coloring Sheet