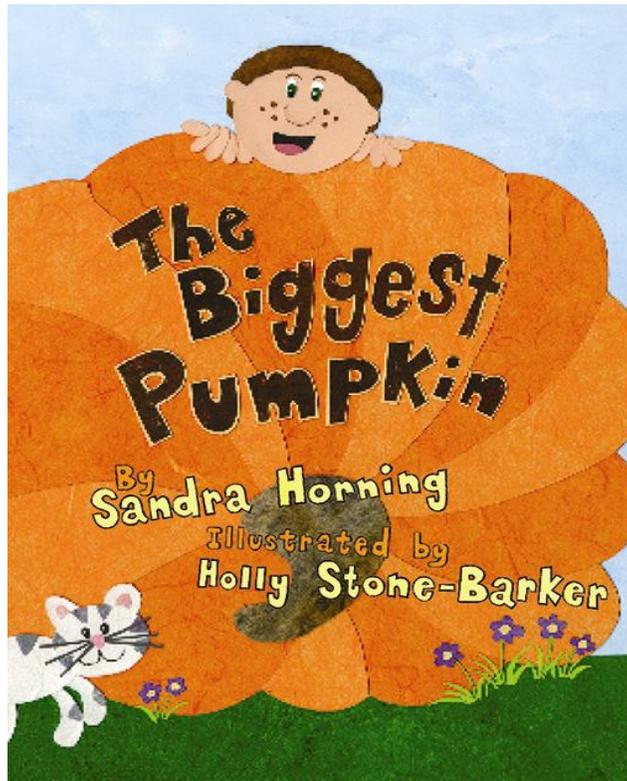


A Teacher's Guide to

The Biggest Pumpkin

Written by Sandra Horning
Illustrated by Holly Stone-Barker



The Biggest Pumpkin © 2014 by Sandra Horning, illustrated by Holly Stone-Barker
Pelican Publishing Company

Summary

Gavin is determined to grow a giant pumpkin and win first prize at the fair! Before he can enter his gourd in the contest, Gavin must first learn how to plant, fertilize, and pollinate the pumpkin seeds. With the help of his family and his neighbors, Gavin watches the seasons pass and his small pumpkin grow bigger and bigger. Perfect for the classroom, the book teaches about the science of gardening. Kids will learn about planting a seed, hand-pollination, protecting plants from frost, and choosing one pumpkin to fertilize so that it will grow to be huge! From planting to pruning to pumpkin pie, this delightful story shows how to cultivate a garden.

- Pelican Publishing Company catalog

Pre-Reading

Pumpkin Poll

Poll your students about pumpkins. Keep track of answers on a chart, such as that shown.

	Yes	No
Have you ever seen a giant pumpkin?		
Was it a prize winner?		
Have you ever grown a pumpkin?		

Analyze: How many children are familiar with pumpkins? Display the results of the Pumpkin Poll with a pictograph. Students will analyze and make connections between reading and their own knowledge of pumpkins.

Common Core:

[CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.C.4](#): Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.

Take a Book Walk

Point out the title and names of the author and illustrator.

Ask: What does the title mean? Who is on the cover with the pumpkin?

Turn the pages and ask what is happening to the pumpkin?

Before you reach the last page, ask how the book might end.

Your students may be unfamiliar with the following words:

pollen	seed	stem	pollinate	compost	fertilizer
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Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.4](#): Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.6](#): With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.7](#): With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

Discussion Questions

1. Why do pumpkin seeds need water and sun? (knowledge)
2. Who is helping to grow the pumpkin? (comprehension)
3. Which character do you like best? Take a class poll and graph the results. (application)
4. How can you tell the pumpkin is growing in each scene? Is Gavin excited? How can you tell? (analysis)
5. What do you need to grow a pumpkin? Design your own garden. (synthesis)
6. What do you think the pumpkin will look liked carved? Is it possible to grow a giant watermelon? (evaluation)

Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1](#): Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4](#): Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.6](#): Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7](#): Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2](#): Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Activities

Language Arts/Communications Skills

- Create a story about the cat in the book. Is the cat a pet? Does the cat have a name?
- Discuss sequencing and have students identify what happens first, second, third, etc.
- Using details from the text, have students compose poems about pumpkins.

Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3](#): Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.5](#): Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

Math

- Discuss pumpkin production: How many seeds does an average pumpkin have? (Average pumpkin has 500-600 seeds.) One pumpkin seed grows one pumpkin plant. How many pumpkins can grow on one plant? (From 10-15 on average.) Create math problems using pumpkin seeds and production.
- Estimate the weight of several average pumpkins. Then weigh the pumpkins to find the actual weight. Compare.
- Estimate the height of several pumpkins. Then measure to find out the actual height.
- Graph the weight and height data for the pumpkins.

Common Core

[CCSS.Math.Content.K.MD.A.1](#): Describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight. Describe several measurable attributes of a single object.

[CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.A.1](#): Order three objects by length; compare the lengths of two objects indirectly by using a third object.

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.A.1](#): Measure the length of an object by selecting and using appropriate tools such as rulers, yardsticks, meter sticks, and measuring tapes.

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.A.3](#): Estimate lengths using units of inches, feet, centimeters, and meters.

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.MD.D.10](#): Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories. Solve simple put-together, take-apart, and compare problems using information presented in a bar graph.

[CCSS.Math.Content.2.OA.A.1](#): Use addition and subtraction within 100 to solve one- and two-step word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.

[CCSS.Math.Content.3.MD.A.2](#): Measure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams (g), kilograms (kg), and liters (l).

[CCSS.Math.Content.3.OA.A.1](#): Interpret products of whole numbers, e.g., interpret 5×7 as the total number of objects in 5 groups of 7 objects each.

Science

- Set up your own garden. Grow a plant in the classroom!
- Discuss basic pumpkin and plant facts: A pumpkin is a vegetable. Identify the seed, stem, leaves, and flowers in the illustrations. (See included activity sheets.) Which is the female flower? Which is the male flower? What is pollination? Why do plants need to be pollinated?
- Pumpkin Life Cycle: How long does it take to grow a pumpkin?

Social Studies/History/Geography

- Discuss where pumpkins are grown in the US.
- Discuss different types of pumpkins that have been grown around the world:
<http://www.pumpkinnook.com/commune/world.htm>
- Discuss different uses of pumpkins around the world (decoration vs. food)

Internet / Computer Skills

- Online pumpkin carving activity: http://www.abcya.com/pumpkin_carving.htm
- Learn more about giant pumpkins: <http://www.bigpumpkins.com/>

Art & Music

- Make pumpkin prints with colored paint. Put paint on the bottom of small pumpkins and stamp them on a white paper.



Photo: Sarah Fitzgerald: <http://the-little-people-place.blogspot.com/2011/09/fall-stamping.html>

- Design faces for carving a pumpkin.

- Sing the song Five Little Pumpkins! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmlqvX1ygOo>

Physical Fitness

- Pumpkin patch fitness game: Make construction paper pumpkin cutouts. Create twice as many pumpkins as students in the class. On each cutout write a different physical fitness skill and the number of times the child needs to do the activity. Examples of activities include sit-ups, skipping, crab walking, jumping jacks, etc. Place all of the pumpkins in the middle of the gym in the pumpkin patch. Have students run to the pumpkin patch, pick a pumpkin and perform the skill. When the activity is completed, students return the pumpkin to the patch and pick a new one.

Source for this activity and others: http://www.ehow.com/list_5903248_halloween-physical-education-games.html.

Additional Resources

- *The Perfect Pumpkin: Growing/Cooking/Carving*, by Gail Damerow (Storey Publishing, 1997)
- *From Seed to Pumpkin (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science 1)*, by Wendy Pfeffer (HarperCollins, 2004)
- *The Pumpkin Book*, by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House, 2000)
- *How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin?*, by Margaret McNamara (Schwartz and Wade, 2007)
- *Carving Pumpkins (How-to Library)*, by Dana Meachen Rau (Cherry Lake Publishing, 2012)
- *Five Little Pumpkins*, by Iris Van Rynbach (Boyd's Mills Press, 1995)
- 40 pumpkin activities for children: <http://handsonaswegrow.com/40-pumpkin-activities-for-kids/>
- Pumpkins Printables and Worksheets: <http://printables.atozteacherstuff.com/645/pumpkins-printables-and-worksheets/>

Free Printable Worksheet Sources

1. Pumpkin Life Cycle from <http://printables.atozteacherstuff.com/645/pumpkins-printables-and-worksheets/>
2. Flower Parts and Pollination Worksheet from Splash at <http://www.sacsplash.org/post/flower-facts>
3. Parts of a Plant from Have Fun Teaching at <https://www.havefunteaching.com/worksheets/science-worksheets/life-science-worksheets/plant-parts-worksheet>

About the Author and Illustrator

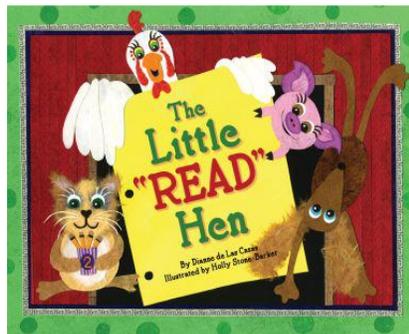


Sandra Horning is also the award winning author of *The Giant Hug* and *Chicks!* Sandra's love of family, friends, pets, and nature inspires much of her writing. Her family lives in Connecticut with 7 chickens. To learn more, visit Sandra at www.sandrahorning.com.



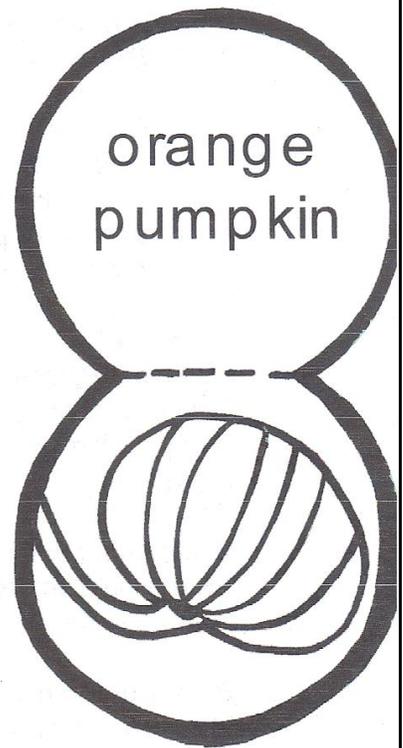
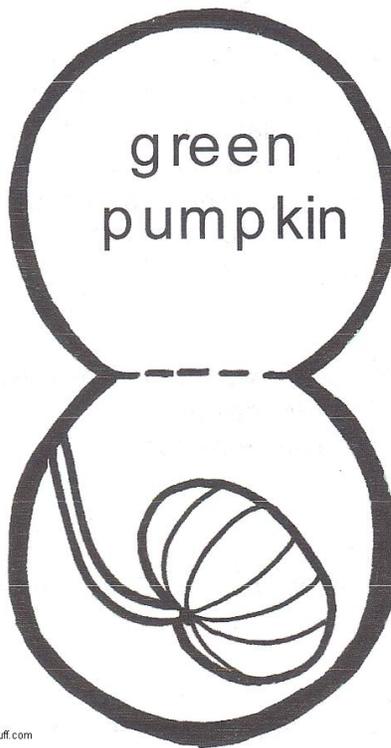
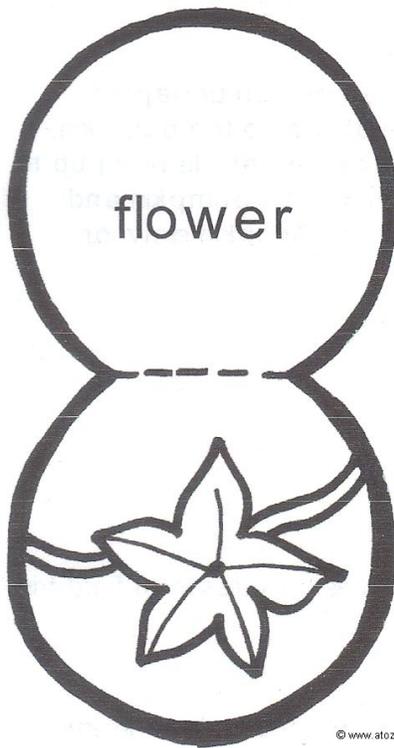
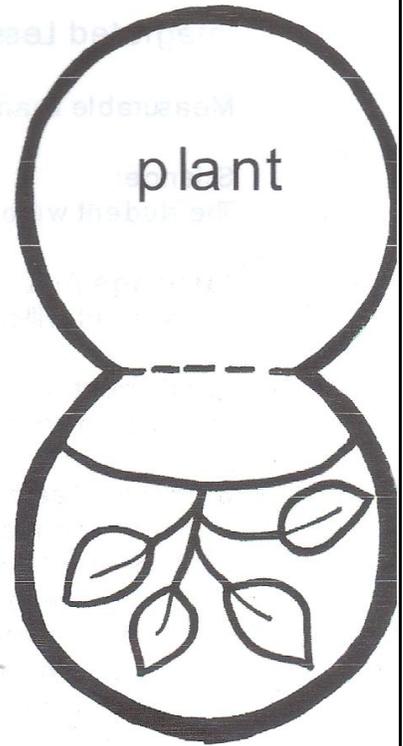
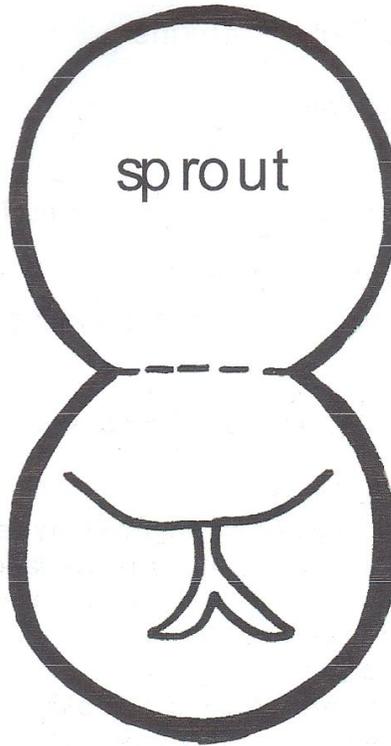
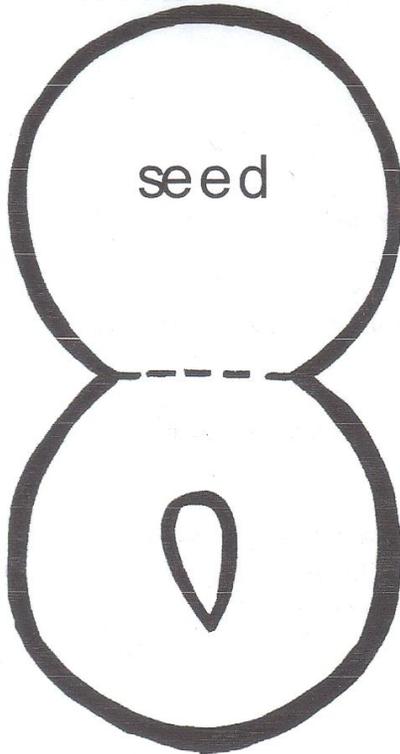
Also by Sandra Horning!

Holly Stone-Barker is the acclaimed illustrator of *Mama's Bayou*, *The House That Witchy Built*, *The Blue Frog Legend of Chocolate*, and *The Little "READ" Hen*. Stone-Barker lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with her family. To learn more, visit Holly at <http://paperedmoon.com/wordpress/>.



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Pumpkin Life Cycle

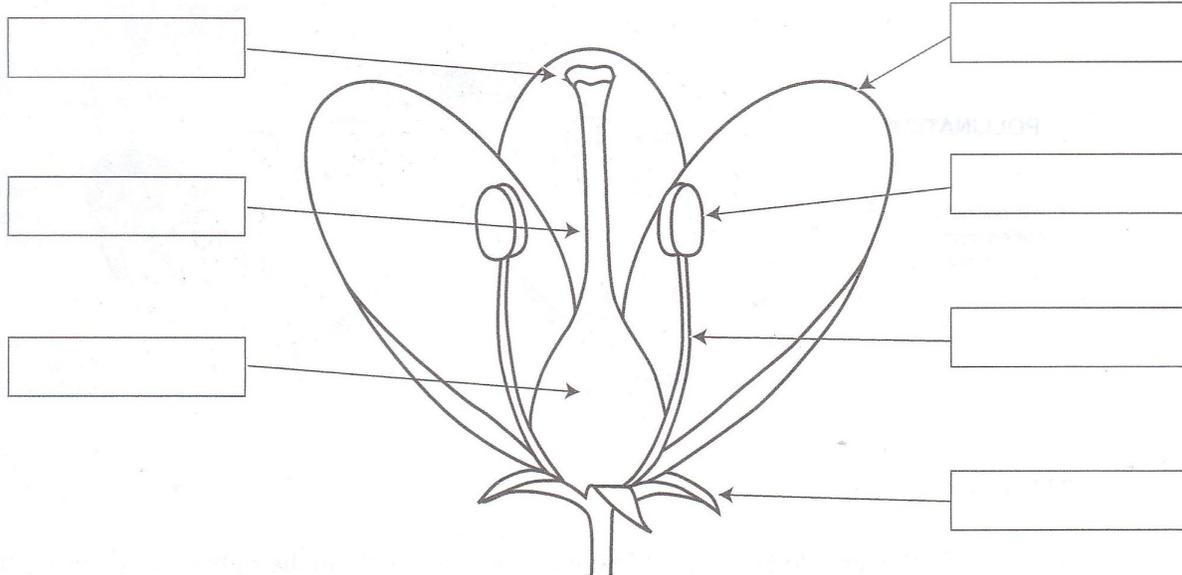


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Name: _____

Flower Parts & Pollination Worksheet

Fill in the boxes with the name of the flower part from the words in the box below. Color the petals red, the sepals green, and the pollen yellow.



anther filament stem ovary petal sepal leaf style stigma twig

How Pollination Works

Fill in the blanks.

1. For plants to make seeds, the pollen from the _____ of one flower needs to fertilize the ovule of another flower.
2. The seeds are produced in the flower's _____, at the base of the pistil.
3. A variety of critters collect pollen and nectar to feed themselves and their young. These critters also carry pollen from one flower to another and are called _____.
4. Name at least four critters that might be pollinators:

Name: _____

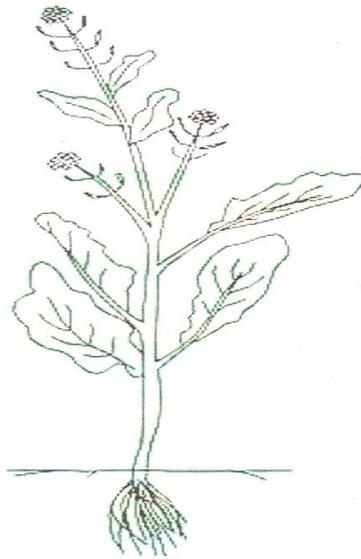
Parts of a Plant

Directions: Match the proper label to the correct plant part.

roots

stem

leaf



flower

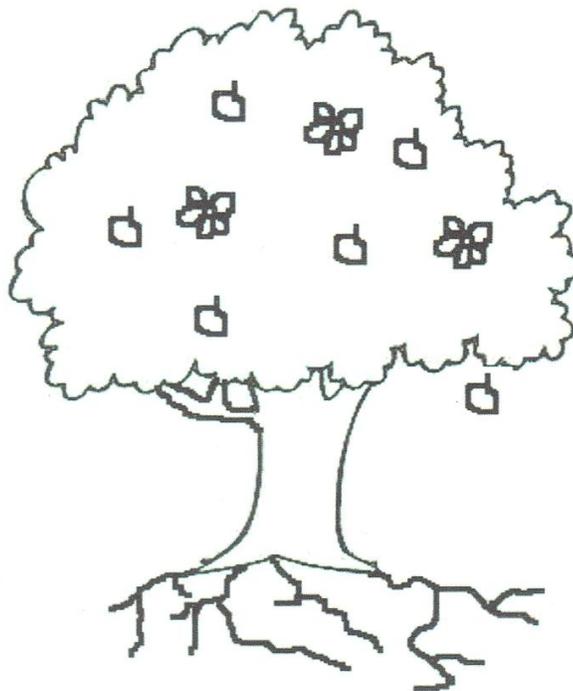
roots

veins

branches

roots

flower



trunk

fruit

leaf

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