

Ag Groups Bring New Teaching Tool to Southwest Louisiana

Louisiana Agriculture in the Classroom has partnered with the Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District as well as other agencies to develop a mobile Conservation Classroom. The intent of the mobile classroom is to broaden conservation knowledge, agricultural literacy and overall education in southwest Louisiana.

Housed in a 40-foot gooseneck trailer complete with electrical functions, the mobile classroom will focus on six areas: soil, water, air, plants, animals and recycling. Each area will have an interactive station within the trailer. For instance, in the soil area students will get to use a Scope on a Rope -- a powerful microscope connected to a computer and projector -- to understand the different properties of soil. They also can create a simulated dust bowl to show why agricultural best management practices are recommended for producers.

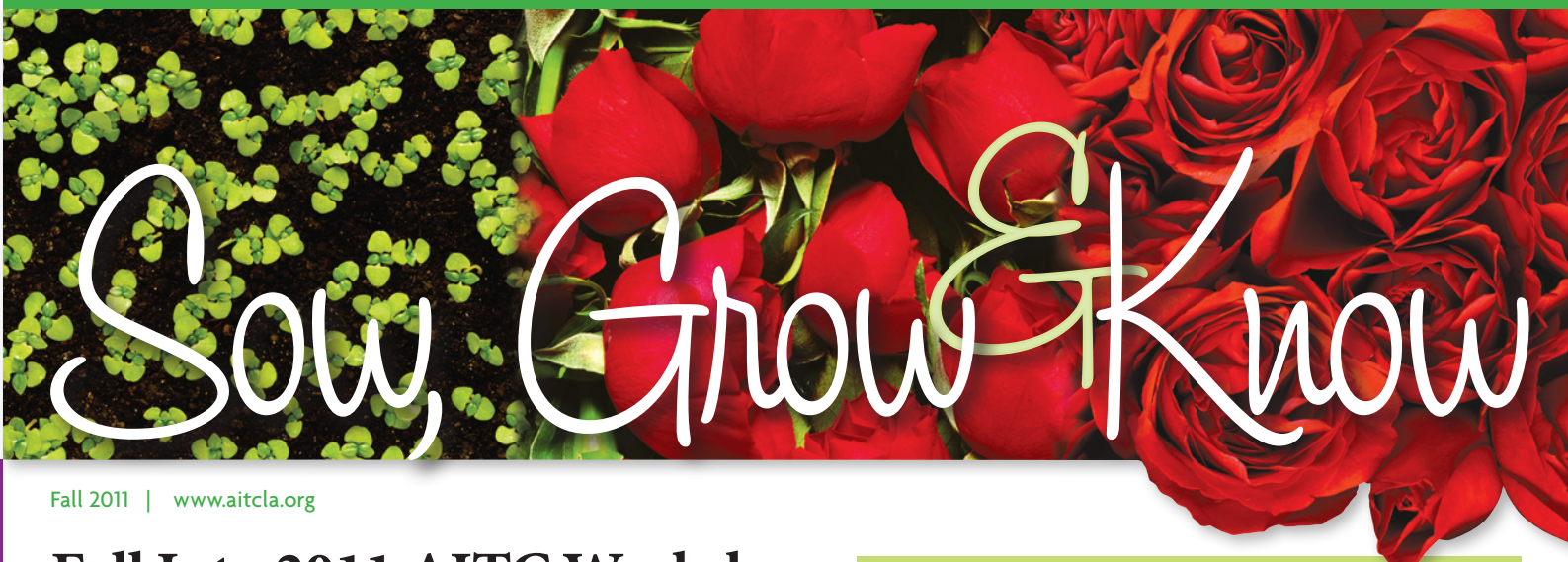
In its initial testing phase, the Conservation Classroom already has educated more than 2,000 students and adults on conservation issues, natural resources and agriculture. The target audience



Conservation Classroom. Louisiana AITC is one of many agricultural and natural resources organizations to fund the Conservation Classroom, a multi-faceted agri-science lab housed in a 40-foot gooseneck trailer.

for the 2011-2012 school year is the Vermilion Parish schools, after which the audience will be expanded to include other parishes in the southwest region.

Project coordinator for the Conservation Classroom is Mitzi Dohrman with the Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District. Visit www.vermilionswcd.weebly.com for additional information on the project.



Fall 2011 | www.aitcla.org

Fall Into 2011 AITC Workshops

Enjoy a teacher's bounty with FREE workshops and materials focused on Louisiana agriculture

Educators across Louisiana will soon be able to register for Louisiana Ag in the Classroom's fall workshops. Scheduled to take place in locations across the state, workshops should be accessible by any educator who values agriculture and wants to share with their students how our nation's food and fiber gets from the farm to the dinner table.

The Ag in the Classroom program is designed to help students understand more about their renewable sources of food, fiber and fuel. Through our workshops and other programs, Ag in the Classroom develops and distributes lesson plans to enrich your curriculum by incorporating agriculture into a wide variety of subject areas.

Workshops are free to educators! This year's training has something for grade levels Pre-K through grade 8. Hands-on workshops include many activities to help you integrate agriculture into your curriculum and are correlated to grade-level expectations. All educators in attendance will receive a wealth of materials including lesson plans, ag-tivities and much more. You also will receive a certificate of attendance documenting your professional growth.

We're proud to announce that two brand new educational units will be introduced at this year's workshops.

Soil is the theme of one new unit, and will focus on soil as one of the most important natural resources. You'll learn how to teach the many ways it impacts life.

The second new unit focuses on **corn**. Did you know there are more than 3,500 ways to use corn? Corn products and by-products are everywhere around us. From photosynthesis, to genetics, to economics and history, the ways to integrate corn into your curriculum are abundant.

Pre-registration is necessary for all workshops, so select the workshop that is the most convenient for you to attend and register as soon as possible. Register online at www.aitcla.org or by returning the registration form located on p. 2 of this newsletter. This year, all workshops begin at 4 p.m. with a meal and/or refreshments. If you have any questions, please call Lynda Danos, AITC State Coordinator, at (225) 922-6503 or Cyndi Guercio, program assistant at (225) 922-6204.

2011 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

<u>Monday, September 12</u> Lake Pontchartrain Elementary 3328 Hwy. 51, LaPlace	<u>Tuesday, September 27</u> Snyder Museum, 1620 East Madison, Bastrop
<u>Wednesday, September 14</u> Lafourche Parish Ag Building 115 Texas Street, Raceland	<u>Tuesday, October 4</u> Lomax Hall Louisiana Tech, Ruston
<u>Monday, September 19</u> Sabine Farm Bureau 575 Hwy. 171 Bypass, Many	<u>Monday, October 10</u> St. Landry School Board Office, 1013 Creswell Lane, Opelousas
<u>Wednesday, September 21</u> Natchitoches Farm Bureau 1191 Hwy. 1 South, Natchitoches	<u>Monday, October 17</u> Lafayette Farm Bureau 101 Toledo Dr., Lafayette
<u>Thursday, September 22</u> Caddo AgCenter 2408 E. 70th St., Shreveport	<u>Tuesday, October 18</u> Calcasieu AgCenter Gulf Highway, Lake Charles
<u>Monday, September 26</u> Thomas Jason Lingo Community Center 10284 Louisiana Hwy 17, Oak Grove	<u>Thursday, October 27</u> Acadia Farm Bureau 21130 Crowley Eunice Hwy., Crowley

All workshops begin at 4 p.m. and include a meal or light refreshments depending on venue.

See page 2 for workshop registration details!

Ag in the Classroom
Louisiana

Post Office Box 95004
Baton Rouge, LA 70895-9004
Ag in the Classroom
Louisiana

National AITC Conference Issues 2012 Call for Proposals

The 2012 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference: Rendezvous in the Rockies will be held in Loveland, CO June 19 – 22.

Don't miss this opportunity to present and attend the National AITC conference, where you'll network, share ideas with your peers and enjoy Colorado's natural beauty. Go to agclassroom.org/conference/index.htm.

to submit workshop and mini-workshop proposals. Proposals must be submitted by Oct. 3, 2011.



National Ag in the Classroom Conference
Loveland, Colorado June 19-22, 2012
www.agclassroom.org

Support Louisiana Agriculture and Ag Education with an AITC Ag Tag

As an ag educator, you want to let folks know how important agriculture is to Louisiana's families and its economy. So show your support for Louisiana agriculture and

Louisiana Ag in the Classroom every time you hit the road.

Check out the AG TAG, a special way to show your support for the people who produce our state's food, fuel and fiber. It's a bold way to show your support for ag educators and education in Louisiana classrooms about farmers, ranchers and the very real ways they contribute to everyone's life, every day.

To purchase your new AG TAG, call the Department of Motor Vehicles' Special Plate Unit at 225-925-6371 when renewing your tag or purchasing a new one. If you prefer, visit www.omv.dps.state.la.us to order online.

The AG TAG costs just \$22.50 in addition to regular license tag fees and each plate sold brings \$19 to the Louisiana Ag in the Classroom Foundation, Inc.



Give Thanks for Louisiana's Sweet Staple, the Yam

Not just a holiday staple, Louisiana yams deliver flavor, fiber and nutrients all year round

It is believed that sweet potatoes have been used for food since prehistoric times, and have connections to our country throughout history. When Columbus landed in the Americas, the native population was already growing sweet potatoes. The pilgrims and Indians ate them at the first Thanksgiving feast. George Washington, the first President of the United States, was a sweet potato farmer.

Botanically, the Louisiana yam is a sweet potato, but the term "yam" is applied to the scientifically-developed sweet potatoes grown in Louisiana today. Due to extensive research done by the Louisiana State University AgCenter, Louisiana today is second in the nation in the production of sweet potatoes.

So why are Louisiana sweet potatoes so tasty? Louisiana's warm, moist soil is filled with minerals and nutrients that sweet potato plants love, so they tend to be juicier and sweeter than sweet potatoes grown in other parts of the United States.

Sweet potatoes are one of nature's most nutritionally complete foods. Their deep orange color denotes large quantities of beta-carotene, which the body needs as Vitamin A. They are low-calorie (only 161 per yam!), and also an excellent source of vitamin E, C and B6, iron, potassium and fiber. The National Academy of Sciences cited sweet potatoes as one of the top four foods that may help prevent cancer and heart disease.

You can easily grow a sweet potato in your classroom as a class project. All you need is a sweet potato, toothpicks, a jar and bottled, non-chlorinated water.

Begin by washing the potato, then insert toothpicks into the sides of the sweet potato about 1/3 of the way down. Place the sweet potato in the jar opening with 2/3 of the potato above the rim. Fill the jar with water so the end of the sweet potato is in the water. In about 10-15 days the sweet potato will begin to bud from the eyes. For the next 3 – 6 months, vines will grow from the sweet potato. Just remember to keep your jar filled with non-chlorinated water and in full to moderate sun.

Learn more fun classroom "ag-tivities" like this one at our statewide Fall workshops!

Save Time — register online at aitcla.org!

2012 Louisiana AITC Workshop Registration Form

Thank you for your interest in attending one of our workshops! You may register online at aitcla.org or complete this form and fax it to (225) 922-6229.

Name _____ E-mail _____

School _____ Grade Taught _____

Parish _____ Phone _____ Fax _____

Workshop Location _____ Workshop Date _____

* Note: Registration deadline is 10 days prior to the workshop date.

NOTE: Would you be interested in contributing lesson plans to our curriculum based on your experience teaching agriculture in YOUR classroom? If so, please contact Lynda Danos at (225) 922-6503 for tips, help developing your lesson plan against Louisiana educational benchmarks and more! Or, just check the box below and we'll be in touch. Thank you, and we're looking forward to working with you to keep our curriculum rich and current.

YES, I'd love to contribute a lesson plan to Louisiana AITC. Please email me.

PETE THE POTATO

Materials

- 1 large potato per student (Louisiana sweet potatoes work great!)
- Small sponges, cotton balls or peat moss
- Grass seed (rye grass recommended)
- Raisins, cloves, carrots, peas, corn and other vegetables
- Construction paper or fabric scraps

DIRECTIONS

1. Slice a short piece off the end of the potato so it will stand upright.
2. Slice a short piece off the top and scoop out a small amount of pulp.
3. Stuff the hole with a sponge, cotton ball or peat moss.
4. Create eyes, nose, mouth, ears or other features with the cloves, raisins, etc.
5. Make a shirt collar for Pete with construction paper or fabric.
6. Moisten the material in the hole on Pete's head and add grass seed.
7. Check the sponge daily to be sure it remains moist. Watch Pete's hair grow!

- Have a contest and select the cutest, funniest, prettiest, etc.



- Tuber Growth: To see how potatoes grow from eyes, suspend a potato supported by toothpicks in a jar of water or set a potato sliced in half in a shallow pan of water.

When shoots are 2-3" long, cut the potato so each piece has a shoot and plant in a pot of soil or outdoors to watch the potatoes grow.

Credit: National FFA Organization Food for America Program