

# COTTON

A COMMODITY FACT SHEET COMPILED BY THE LOUISIANA AG IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM



## HISTORY

In the early 1800s there was a great agricultural boom in cotton. Times were ripe for a cheap textile material because power looms could turn out cheap weavings. Also, the growth of cities provided new markets. But the most important factor in the cotton boom was the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney. That meant the long process of hand separation of lint from seed was a thing of the past. Since Louisiana had great areas of rich land, the state was ready to cultivate the highly desirable crop.

Cotton has hundreds of uses in our everyday lives. These range from the sheets we sleep on at night, the clothes we put on in the morning to the laces in our shoes. The world uses cotton more than any other fiber.

## PRODUCTS

The cotton plant can be broken down into various parts. All parts of the cotton plant are useful. The fiber or lint is the most important part and is used to make cloth. The cottonseeds can be crushed and separated into three parts — oil, meal and hulls. The oil is used for shortening, cooking oil and salad dressings. The meal and hulls remaining are used in livestock feeds and fertilizers. The stalk and leaves of the plant are plowed into the soil to help enrich it. Cotton is planted in the spring and harvested in the fall by mechanical pickers. The growing season is 150 to 180 days. Farmers produce an average of more than one bale of cotton per acre of land. A bale of cotton is equal to 500 pounds of lint. Today when cotton is harvested, it is stored in modules. Modules hold 13 to 15 bales.

The fiber to make textiles is only one product we get from cotton. In fact the cotton plant produces more food for both people and animals than it does fiber. The cottonseed also has value. The seed can be broken down into three parts: linters, kernels and the hulls. The kernel of the seed is where cottonseed oil comes from. Cottonseed oil can be found in a wide variety of food products such as chips, crackers, salad dressing just to name a few. The linters are the short fibers that cling to the seed. Linters are used in such things as film and currency. The hulls are used in animal feed to provide roughage.



### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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[http://www.aitcla.org/files/  
commodity\\_handout\\_sheets.pdf](http://www.aitcla.org/files/commodity_handout_sheets.pdf)

TRY THIS ACTIVITY YOURSELF!

# SPROUTING FINGERS



## INGREDIENTS

Each student will need:

- One clear food handler's glove
- Five different small seeds (see example)
- Five cotton balls (one for each finger)
- Permanent marker
- Six small bowls for water and seeds

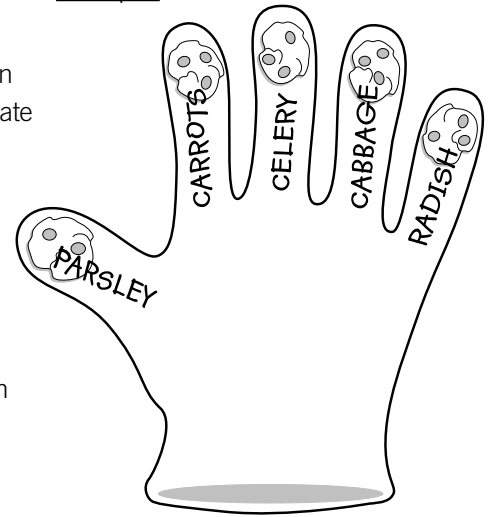
1. Write the name of a different seed type on each finger and thumb of the glove.
2. Dip a cotton ball into water. Saturation is not necessary.
3. Dip the cotton ball into the bowl of one of the seeds you plan to sprout. Less than a dozen seeds works best, so use a light touch.
4. Place the cotton ball, seeds and all, into the correctly labeled finger. Do the same for the remaining four types of seeds.

5. Secure the opening with tape or a paper clip.

Example:

There is no need to water; the cotton ball contains enough water to germinate the seeds. Most seeds will sprout within a week; seeds will even sprout in the dark! You can even transplant them (transplant the entire cotton ball with seeds into a pot of soil).

Do not use large seeds such as corn or beans. The cotton will contain only enough water to enlarge these seeds, not germinate them.



# BOUNTY FROM A BALE

Cotton is the fiber most-used fiber in the world, and a single bale makes a tremendous number of products! Here is an idea of what can be made from one bale of cotton:

## WOMEN'S PRODUCTS

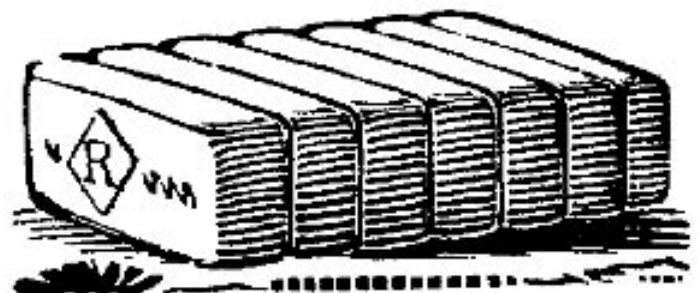
Handkerchiefs . . . . .	21,960
Dresses . . . . .	274
Bras . . . . .	6,460
Knit panties . . . . .	6,436
Jeans . . . . .	249
Skirts . . . . .	409
Mid-calf socks . . . . .	4,321
Woven blouses . . . . .	773
Sweaters . . . . .	379
Nightgowns . . . . .	780
Woven pants . . . . .	415
Shorts . . . . .	733

## MEN'S PRODUCTS

Handkerchiefs . . . . .	8,347
Woven dress shirts . . . . .	765
Woven sport shirts . . . . .	906
Boxer shorts . . . . .	2,104
Jockey shorts . . . . .	2,419
Sleeveless undershirts . . . . .	1,943
T-shirts . . . . .	1,217
Dress pants . . . . .	484
Work gloves . . . . .	1,918
Mid-calf socks . . . . .	3,557
Jeans . . . . .	215

## OTHER ITEMS

Cloth diapers . . . . .	3,085
Sheets . . . . .	249
Pillowcases . . . . .	1,256
Terry bath towels . . . . .	690
\$100 bills . . . . .	313,600



Credit: National Cotton Council