

# Kids Korner

## Dustin Goes To Great Lengths To Measure Sunflowers

Pennsylvania Furnace (Huntingdon Co.) — Every day the sunflowers that Dustin Fleck planted are growing taller and taller.

Long ago, the flowers' height surpassed Dustin's reach. He was curious: how tall were those sunflowers that towered over his head?

With the help of his mom Karen and dad Tim, Dustin taped together four yard sticks end to end. He found out the sunflowers are 12-feet high.

Dustin is very proud of his sunflowers. Every year the Fleck family plants sunflowers among many other vegetables and flowers.

"We didn't do anything differently this year," his mom said of

the sunflowers unusual growth. "My husband just put manure on and tilled it into the soil before planting the seeds."

Dustin loves working in the garden, especially picking the produce.

His mom said that Dustin is so eager to pick things that she needs to beg him to wait until the plants mature.

"He's a real outdoors boy. He loves to fish and hunt. And, he loves insects—he'll pick up anything to examine," she said.

Dustin attends first grade at Ferguson Township Elementary School. Although he loves school, he is always eager to return home to help his dad on the beef farm and in the garden.



Six-year-old Dustin Fleck measures his 12-foot tall sunflowers.

## Smart Stuff

WITH TWIG WALKINGSTICK

### How do apples ripen?

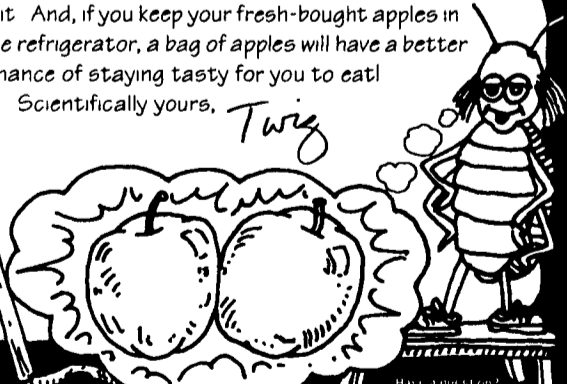
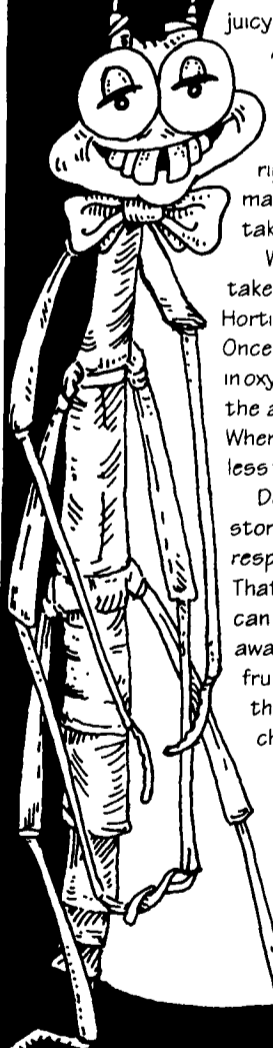
The warm days and cool nights of fall make sweet, juicy, crisp apples just right for picking.

Apples ripen — or get sweeter — by changing the starches in the fruit to sugars. Colder temperatures make apples convert the starches faster. And, even if you picked a mature apple before it was completely ripe, it would still continue to ripen off the tree. But making sure the apple doesn't turn into a mushy mess takes some plant biology know-how.

When an apple is on the tree, it acts a lot like a leaf. It takes in carbon dioxide from the air and gives off oxygen. Horticulturists call this form of plant breathing respiration. Once an apple is picked, it "breathes" the other way, taking in oxygen and giving off carbon dioxide and water. Reducing the amount of water lost is key to keeping apples crisp. When an apple loses water, it gets softer because there is less water pressure inside the cells to keep the fruit firm.

Decreasing the amount of oxygen where apples are stored forces them into a kind of hibernation. The respiration slows down, so the apple loses less water. That's why apple growers store fruit in huge coolers. They can pick the fruit a little before ripening, ship it to a far-away destination, and still sell crisp, flavorful, ripe fruit. And, if you keep your fresh-bought apples in the refrigerator, a bag of apples will have a better chance of staying tasty for you to eat!

Scientifically yours, Twig



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Have a question?  
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## MAZE

Start Here ↓

## SEEK AND FIND

FIND THESE WORDS IN THE PUZZLE BELOW

CHIPMUNK	JUNK	SKUNK
CHUNK	KERPLUNK	SPUNK
DUNK	MONK	STUNK
FLUNK	PUNK	TRUNK

THE WORDS READ UP, DOWN AND ACROSS

A	D	G	J	L	P	O	I	W	U
E	V	C	A	S	U	D	T	Y	Y
G	H	S	K	U	N	K	J	K	M
V	D	U	N	K	K	E	B	T	N
C	C	H	U	N	K	R	S	R	X
N	B	V	L	Z	N	P	T	U	Q
M	L	K	F	G	O	L	U	N	E
T	C	H	I	P	M	U	N	K	R
Y	B	H	M	J	U	N	K	L	O
W	T	S	P	U	N	K	Y	O	P

