



United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

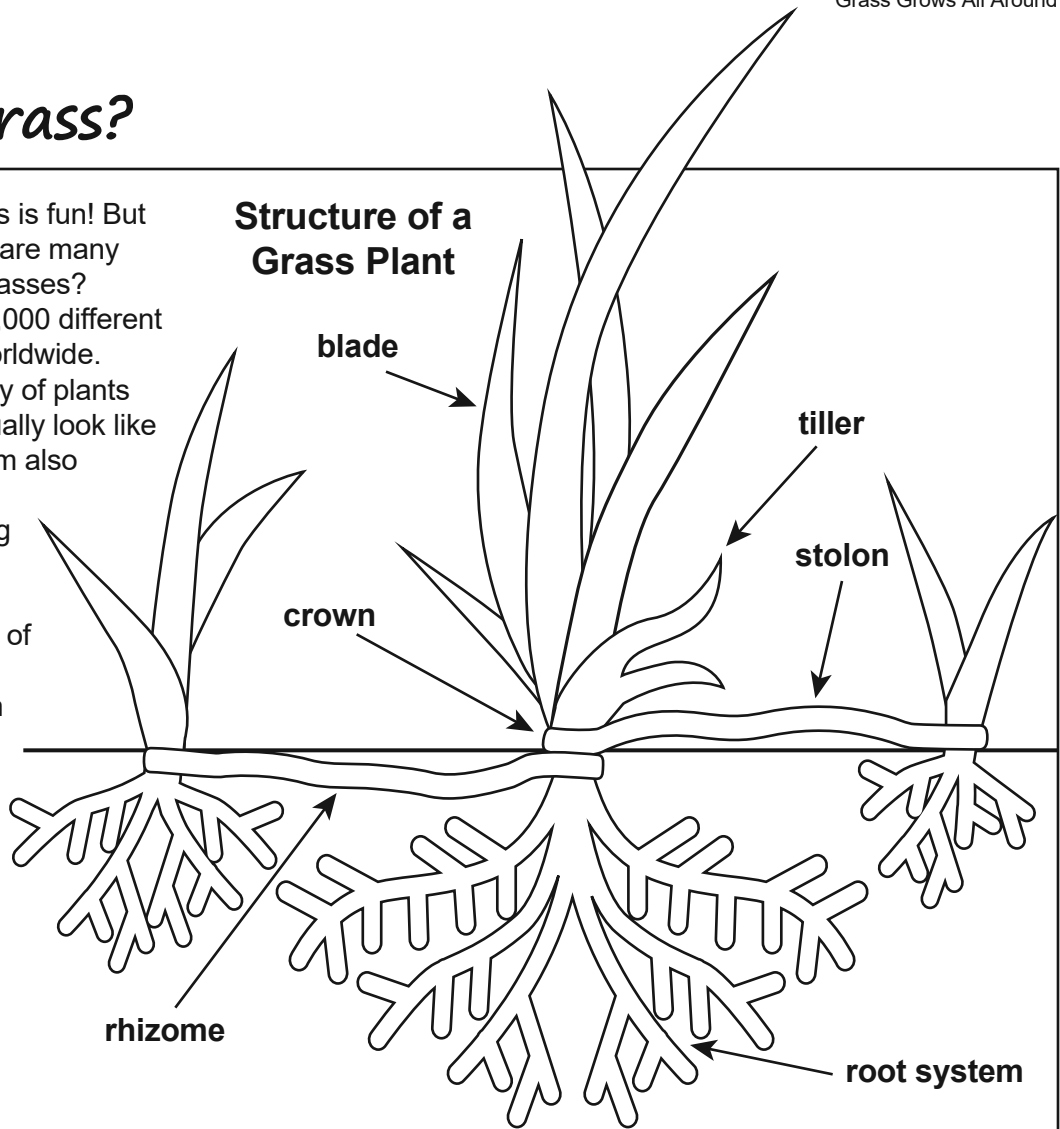
April 2018

*Helping People Help the Land*

# What is grass?

Playing on the grass is fun! But did you know there are many different types of grasses? There are about 10,000 different species of grass worldwide. Grasses are a family of plants with leaves that usually look like blades. Most of them also have hollow stems and many branching roots. They are all part of the Poaceae family, which is one of the most abundant families of plants on earth. They also come in a wide range of sizes and types. Grass plants include oats, corn, rice, cereal and wheat.

## Structure of a Grass Plant



*Color this grass plant.*

## Word Search

From pasture grasses for animal consumption to food crops, grass makes up the world's most significant food source. Can you spot these 11 important words related to grass?

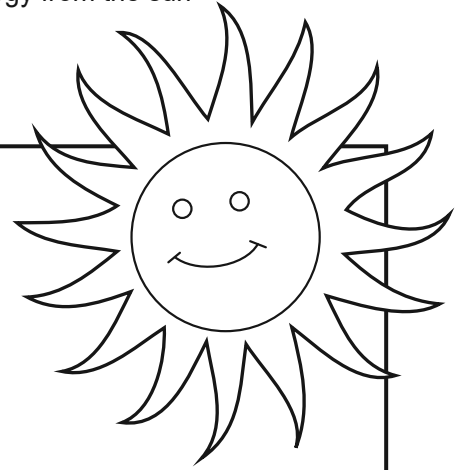
- grass
- rhizome
- animals
- plants
- tiller
- blade
- stolon
- photosynthesis
- crown
- leaves
- roots

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

## Why is grass green?

That's thanks to a chemical called chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is a green pigment found in all green plants. It reflects green light which makes grass look green. It converts light energy from the sun into sugars that can be used by plants and grass. This is called photosynthesis.

*Draw a grass plant and include the roots.*



# Grass is very important in our lives!

Grass is a major food source all over the world. Most livestock animals like cows, sheep, goats and many more feed primarily on grasses. Plants use sugars, starches, proteins, oils and fats to grow and reproduce itself.

*Unscramble the words below to reveal foods that come from grass plants.*

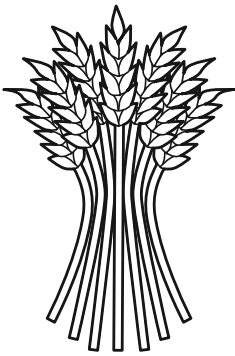
1. stoa \_\_\_\_\_

2. ronc \_\_\_\_\_

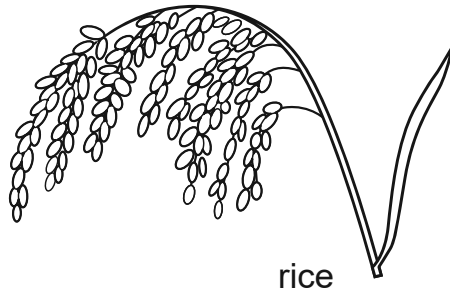
3. irce \_\_\_\_\_

4. leaecr \_\_\_\_\_

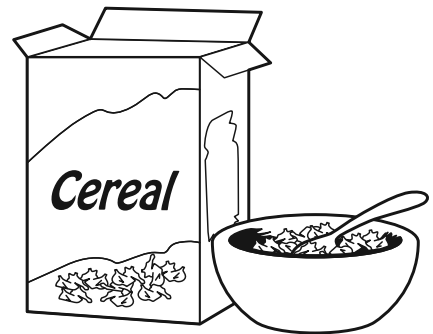
5. hewta \_\_\_\_\_



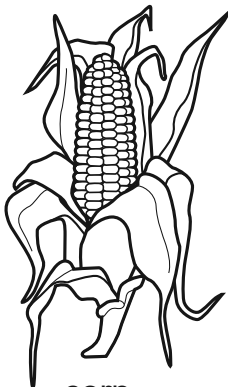
wheat



rice



cereal



corn



oats



# Did you know grass makes its own food?

Grass makes food for growth in the “food factory” in its leaves. It uses food stored in the roots to live on while it is dormant in the winter and it makes new growth in the spring. Roots are the highways that bring water and nutrients from the soil to the food factory in the leaves. From the air, leaves get carbon dioxide. Using energy from the sun, the food factory combines these elements into food that the grass plant uses to grow.

## What are nutrients?

Nutrients are the substances in food that our bodies process to enable it to function. Your nutrient requirements are influenced by factors including your age, growth stage and activity. Just like you need food and water to survive and get strong, plants do too.

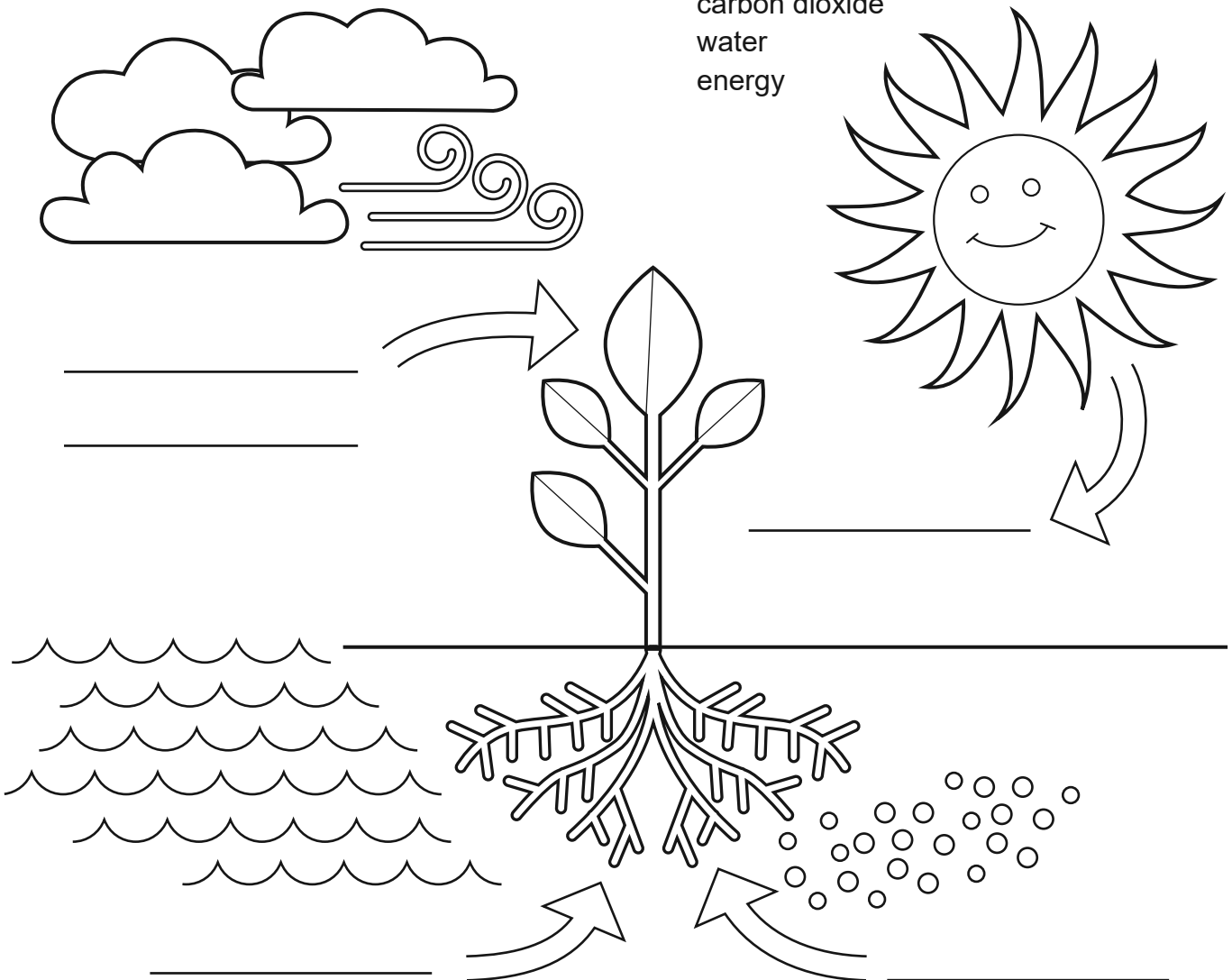
## What is soil?

Soil is the top layer of the surface of the earth in which plants can grow. Plants’ roots grow in soil. Roots absorb nutrients and water needed for plants to grow.

*Fill the blanks that help explain how grass makes its own food.*

### Word Key:

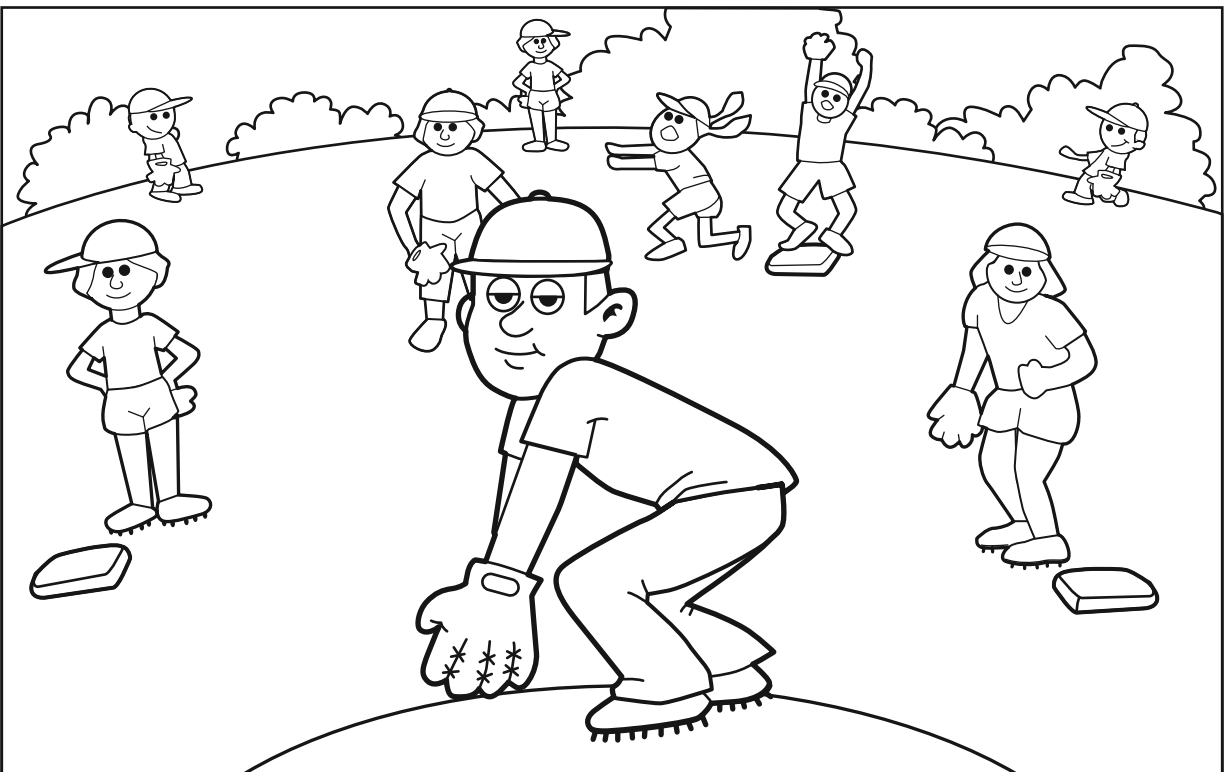
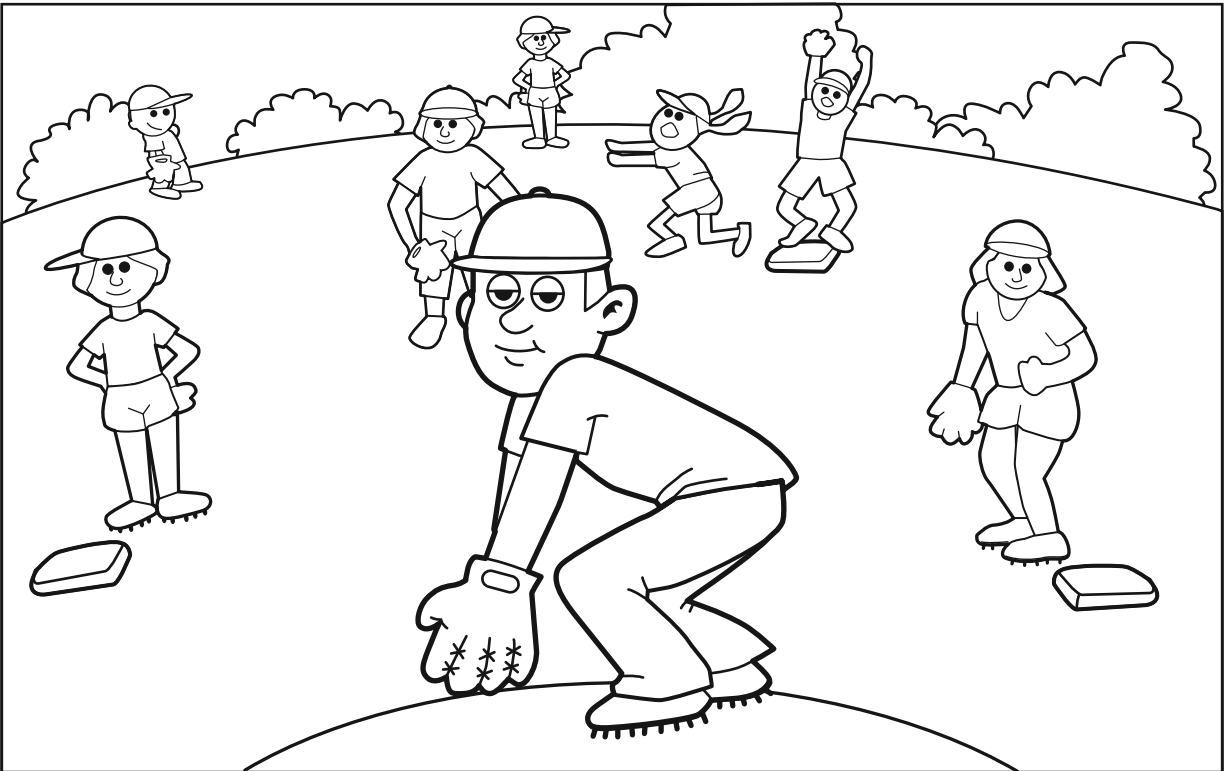
- nutrients
- carbon dioxide
- water
- energy



# Grass is important to sports and recreation

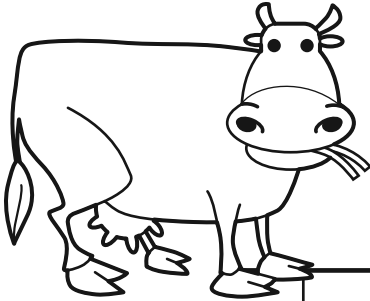
Don't you just love going to the park? Having picnics and playing all day on the grass sounds fun! Grass is used commonly for recreation and sports as well as providing places where we can spend time outside the home. Sports like baseball, football, lacrosse, soccer, softball, golf and many others require grass fields.

*Spot the difference between these two pictures of a sport played on grass.*

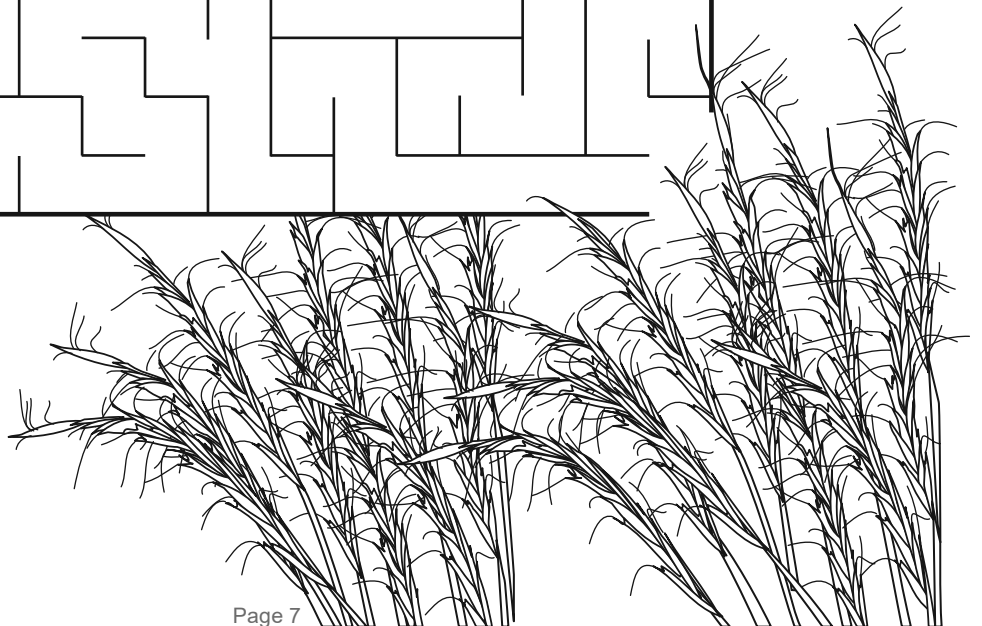
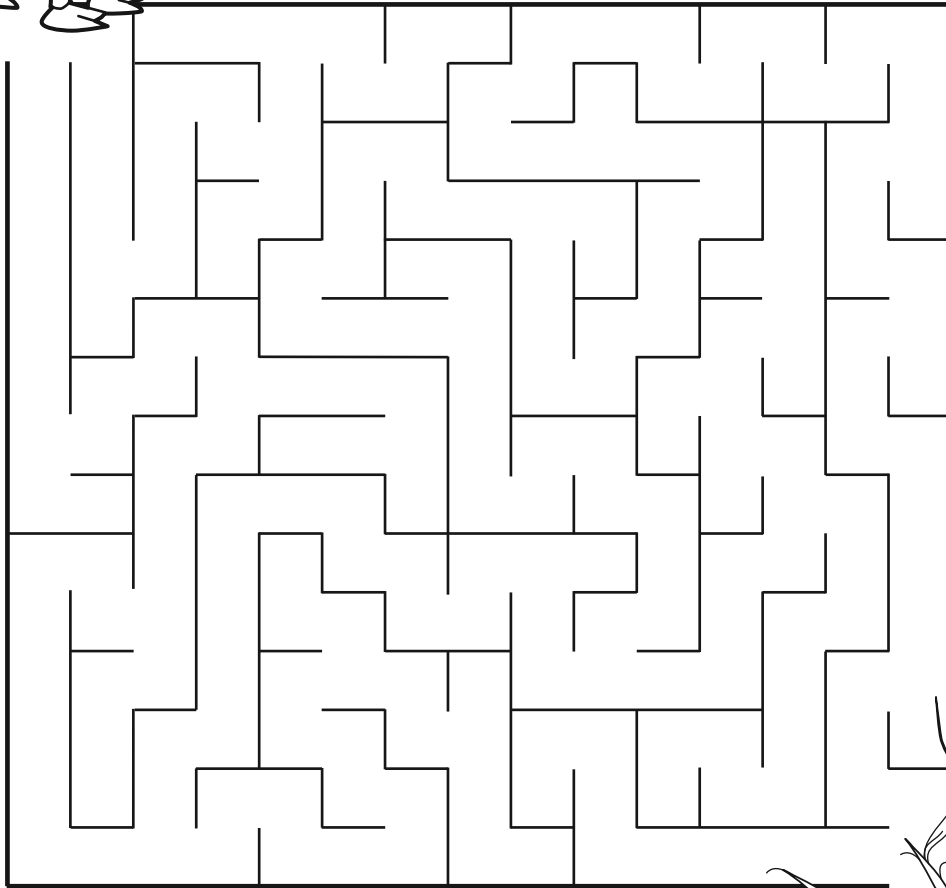


# Bluebunch wheatgrass

Bluebunch wheatgrass is the state grass of Montana. Of all the state's native symbols, it enjoys the widest range. This grass grows in a lot of different habitats, but is found mostly in well-drained, medium to rough textured soils. It spreads by seed and grows from 1.5 to 4 feet tall. It can be used to feed cattle, horses, sheep, elk, deer and antelope at different times during the year. It can also be used to make hay, which is nutritious food for cattle. The state grass greens up early throughout Montana, grows in most soils, and extends above the early snows of fall to provide excellent food for livestock.



*Help the cow find her way to the grass to eat for lunch.*



# Make your Own Grass Buddy

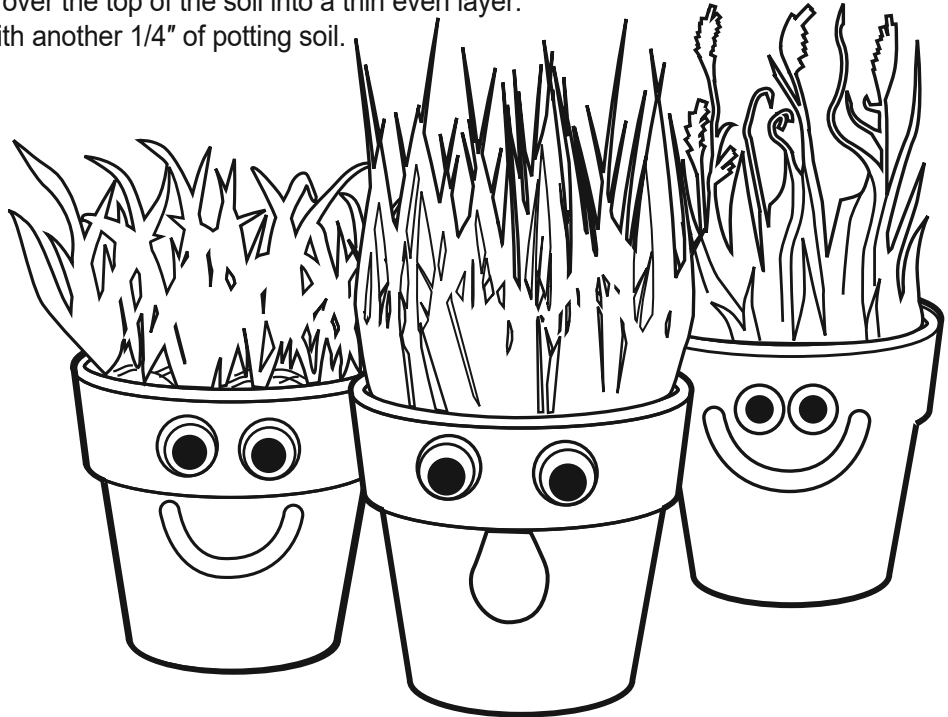
**You will need:** Flower pots, potting soil and wheatgrass berries.

**Steps to follow:**

1. Put potting soil in the flower pot, but not all the way to the top. Leave an inch or so of space.
2. Sprinkle the wheatgrass berries over the top of the soil into a thin even layer.
3. Cover the wheatgrass berries with another 1/4" of potting soil.
4. Lightly water the soil.

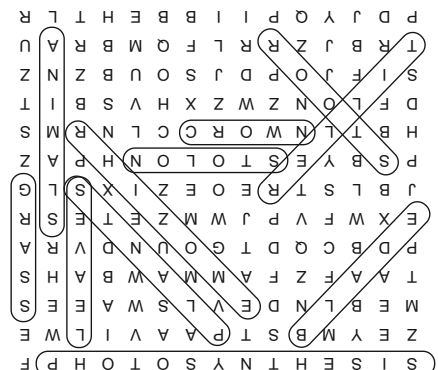
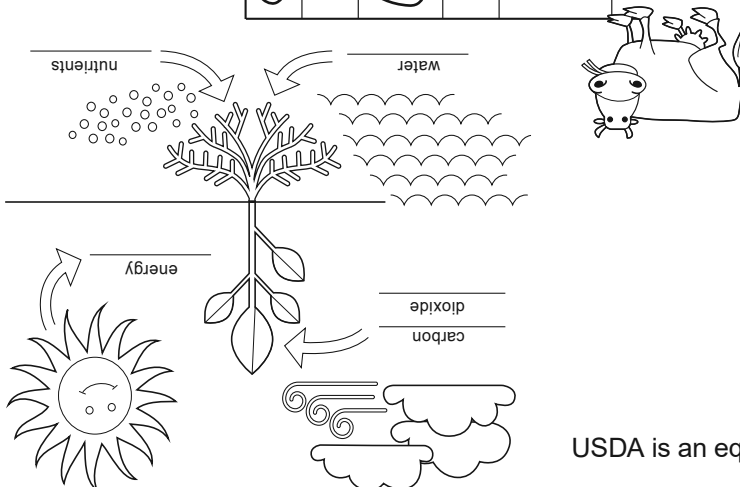
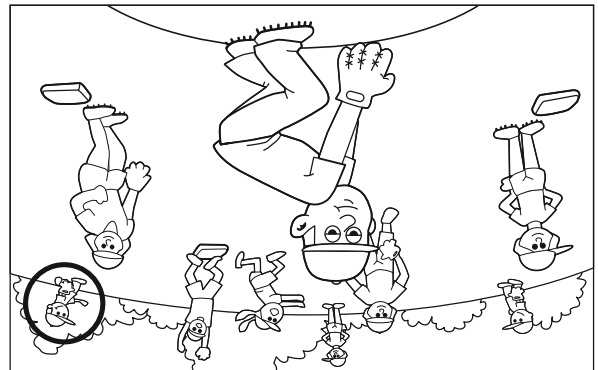
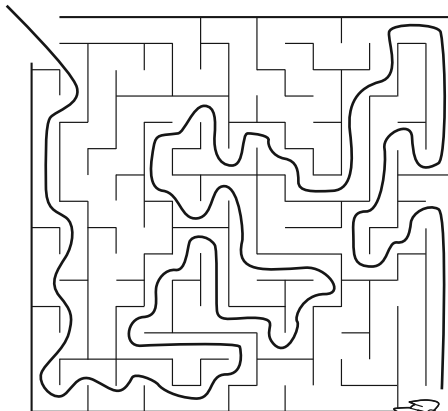
You will see the seeds begin to spout within a day or two. Give it a week and the grass buddies will be full grown!

Wheatgrass grows incredibly quickly, so it will only take 7-10 days to have a pot full of lush dark green grass. Choose some embellishments to create the buddy's' face, and use glue to attach them to the pots. Remember to water it often and have lots of fun!



**Answer Key**

- 1. stoa
  - 2. ronc
  - 3. irce
  - 4. leacr
  - 5. hewta
- oats  
corn  
rice  
cereal  
wheat



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