

Fresh Story | Cranberries

Indigenous peoples have used cranberries for generations—eating them raw, in sauces and breads, and in pemmican, a mix of dried meat, tallow, and berries. Today, dried cranberries remain a popular, tangy snack for trail mixes, cereals, and lunches. They're made by heating cranberries on a sheet pan at a low temperature for several hours until they resemble raisins.



Now there are about 17 cranberry farms in Nova Scotia! Many people in Nova Scotia still enjoy harvesting wild cranberries in their communities where they grow.

Cranberries grow in bogs—wet, spongy areas that can be naturally occurring or man-made using dykes. During harvest, farmers flood the bogs, loosen the berries from the vines, and collect them as they float to the surface, since cranberries are hollow.

Did you know?

Good cranberries bounce!

In 1880, John Webb discovered this after dropping his crop down the stairs, leading him to invent the bounce board separator, which sorts berries by their bounce.





Activities for P – Grade 3

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS –

Students write or talk about what they enjoy about cranberries. They can describe the taste, smell, or texture from memory using activities such as a word cloud, round robin, talking stick, or list-making.

VISUAL ARTS – Students create cranberry bog scenes using fingerprints or pencil tops for cranberries and sponges or brushes for stems and leaves. They can include pollinators like bees and butterflies enjoying the bog environment.

SCIENCE – Students use their sense of touch and sight to predict which cranberries are most fresh, then test their predictions using the ‘bounce test.’ Teachers can slightly bruise some berries if needed to ensure varied results. Working individually or in groups, students feel and examine their cranberries, separate the freshest from the least, and bounce them to check their accuracy.

Activities for Grade 4-6

MATHEMATICS – Students test the freshness of store-bought cranberries by measuring how high they bounce, following this model: Cranberry Bounce Experiment [cranberry1.pdf](#). After collecting data, they create a bar graph showing how many cranberries reached each height range (0–10 cm, 10–20 cm, 20–30 cm, etc.). The class discusses what the results reveal about produce freshness and the value of buying local.

SCIENCE / SOCIAL STUDIES – Students can research and draw a food web that includes wild cranberries to explore ecosystems and discuss the Mi’kmaq relationships with food and nature.

SCIENCE – Students investigate what cranberries need for optimal growth—focusing on pollination, bog environments, and weather conditions. They examine why bogs are ideal for cranberries and observe how the plant changes through the seasons.

