MORE THAN PEANUTS
An activity book in honor of George Washington Carver

Carver Journal
George Washington Carver enjoyed studying the world around him. As a boy, he spent hours exploring the woods near his home west of Diamond, Missouri, and was fascinated by the plants and rocks he found. These woods were his secret garden where he cared for his favorite plants. He would often draw or paint observations of the plants he saw, which helped him care for them.

Carver’s skill with plant care led his neighbors to seek plant help, from whom they called the “plant doctor”!

Plant problems got you down? Looking to learn?

During a Garden visit, stop in at the Center for Home Gardening to chat with some of the Garden’s plant experts who can answer questions about your gardening needs!
Observe and Sketch
Plants are always changing to adapt to their environment and those changes teach us a lot! While you explore the Garden or your favorite nature spot, draw a picture of a plant you love. If you bring your picture with you on your next visit, you can see how your plant has changed!

“Since new developments are the products of a creative mind, we must therefore stimulate and encourage that type of mind in every way possible.”

-George Washington Carver
Think about it! Carver observed that soil on farms that only grew cotton yielded less crops the longer that the farmers continued to only grow cotton on the land. What did other soil have that cotton heavy soil didn’t?

Try something new! Carver believed that rotating crops would improve the land, leading to better crop yields. So, he created a travelling educational classroom where he taught poor, rural farmers about crop rotation to help both the soil and the farmers!

Solved? Cotton drains soil of usable nitrogen, which cotton needs to grow. Carver’s classroom introduced farmers to peanut and soybean farming which, instead of taking nitrogen from the soil, returns usable nitrogen to the soil in addition to feeding the farmers. Crop rotation prevented farm failure so well that farmers still use the strategy today!
Get Creative! What do you do with a bushel of peanuts? While Carver solved the soil problem farmers faced, how would the farmers sell their new crops? There was not a huge demand for peanuts, soy, or sweet potatoes at the time. Carver got creative and developed hundreds of products from the crops. From food products to plastics to gasoline, Carver experimented with what he could create without fear of failure!

“Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.”- George Washington Carver

Design your plan to help others with plants!
Can you design a way to grow more food at home?
Plan and imagine with your friends, family, or even the staff here at the Garden!

Keep in mind what plants need: nutrients (like those found in soil), sun, $CO_2$, water, and space to grow.
In 2005, the Missouri Botanical Garden added a sculpture of George Washington Carver by Tina Allen. It shows Carver around 65 years old, with a wise, gentle expression as he stands holding a small plant to the sunlight.

**Visit George Washington Carver**

Look closely at the life-size bronze statue of Dr. Carver. How many of these questions can you answer?

1. What is pinned to Carver’s collar?

2. What kind of coat is Carver wearing?

3. What do you think Carver is thinking?
Sketch it! When you find the George Washington Carver statue think about a person who helps others like Carver! Draw a picture of how you would like to honor them.
Others Who Made History

While Carver is a highly recognizable African American scientist who impacted aquiculture, he was not alone.

**Henry Blair** was the second African American to be issued a patent. The corn planter and cotton planter he invented greatly increased efficiency on the farm by limiting labor and time.

![Diagram of a corn planter](image)

**Booker T. Whatley** expanded on Carver’s work, increasing the profitability of small farms. His focus on community agriculture led to what is now known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which continues to be a guide for small farmers towards profitable and sustainable businesses.

Recently, **Jason Brown** used the wealth from his NFL career to increase food security in his community by establishing a farm of his own. First Fruits Farm, his farm, donates the some of every harvest to food pantries in North Carolina and educates others on how to take steps to end hunger.

![Photo of Jason Brown](image)

To find local farms to support and to learn more about CSA please visit [www.localharvest.org/saint-louis-mo/csa](http://www.localharvest.org/saint-louis-mo/csa)

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