

July - Week 3

Power Plants, Plant Powers

Even though the days are becoming shorter, July is known as our hottest, sunniest month. That sunlight gives us average temperatures in the 80s and on occasion some days into the 100s. In fact, this solar energy provides more than heat. It makes it possible for life to exist on earth. It drives our climate, heating the Earth's surface, powering atmospheric and oceanic currents and cycles, powering photosynthesis. Through the chemical process of photosynthesis, plants serve as little "factories" using solar energy to convert water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and carbohydrates that are the primary food source for earth's creatures. Thus, plants make our lives possible.

Fields, gardens, and woodlands are full of crops that will feed people and animals across Minnesota and beyond. Raspberries are ripening along woodland edges and in gardens. Peas and green beans may be ready to pick in gardens and fields. And the first locally grown sweet corn is most likely being sold in stores and at the end of farmers' driveways across Minnesota.

This week, visit a garden, a woodland edge, a farm, or even a farmer's market. Make a list of the fresh produce you are able to find. Which is your favorite summer plant treat that has been nourished by the rain and summer sun in Minnesota? What other animals do you think are enjoying a meal or possibly a feast on this summer's crop?

Find a place to sit and enjoy some plant treats while soaking up the sun or relaxing in the shade on a hot July day. Sketch, color, or paint a picture of your favorite summer vegetables and fruits. What is it about them that you enjoy? Add some juicy descriptive words to your journal entry that will make you and any potential readers search out some plant treats to eat.

