Name: _____ Date: _____

Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

Circle group

Saffron is a spice. It turns food golden yellow. It smells warm and flowery. It costs a lot of money. Here is why.

Saffron comes from a purple flower called a crocus. Inside each flower are three thin red threads. Those threads are the spice. A person must pick them out by hand.

The flowers bloom for a short time in the fall. Workers pick them early in the morning. They pull out the threads right away. Then the threads are dried gently. This keeps their color and smell.

One flower gives only three threads. A small jar needs thousands of flowers. That is a lot of work for a pinch of spice.

The spice is strong, so a cook needs only a few threads. Cooks soak them in warm water first. Then the color spreads through the rice.

Questions

1. What color does saffron turn food?

_____

_____

2. Which part of the crocus is the spice?

_____

_____

3. When do the flowers bloom?

_____

_____

4. Why are the threads dried gently?

_____

_____

5. Why does saffron cost so much?

_____

_____

6. What do cooks do to spread the color through rice?

_____

_____

Words to know

spice: a plant part that adds flavor or color to food
crocus: a small flower that grows from a bulb
bloom: to open into a flower
threads: thin strands, like pieces of string
pinch: a very small amount held between two fingers

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

Triangle group

Saffron is a spice that turns food a golden yellow. It has a warm, flowery smell. It also costs a lot of money, and the reason is how it is made.

Saffron comes from a purple flower called a saffron crocus. Inside each flower are three thin red threads. Those threads are the spice. A person has to pick them out, and no machine does the job well.

The flowers bloom for only a short time in the fall. They are often picked early in the morning, before the sun opens them wide. Workers carry the flowers indoors and pull out the threads right away. The threads are dried gently so they keep their color and their smell.

One flower gives only three threads. A small jar of saffron takes thousands and thousands of flowers. That is a great deal of work for a pinch of spice.

Because the spice is so strong, a cook needs only a few threads. Cooks often soak them in warm water first, so the color spreads through a whole pot of rice.

Questions

1. What color does saffron turn food?

_____

_____

2. Which part of the saffron crocus is the spice?

_____

_____

3. When do the flowers bloom?

_____

_____

4. Why are the threads dried gently?

_____

_____

5. Why does saffron cost so much?

_____

_____

6. What do cooks do to spread saffron's color through a pot of rice?

_____

_____

Words to know

spice: a plant part that adds flavor or color to food
crocus: a small flower that grows from a bulb
bloom: to open into a flower
threads: thin strands, like pieces of string
pinch: a very small amount held between two fingers

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
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Name: _____ Date: _____

Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

Square group

Saffron is a spice that tints food a brilliant golden yellow and gives it a warm, flowery aroma. It is also very expensive, and the reason lies in the way it is made.

The spice comes from a purple flower known as the saffron crocus. Inside each blossom are three slender red threads, and those threads are the spice itself. A person has to pluck them out carefully, because no machine does the job well.

The flowers bloom for only a brief time each fall. They are often picked in the early morning, before the sun has opened them wide. Workers carry the blossoms indoors and remove the threads immediately, and then the threads are dried gently so that they keep their color and their fragrance.

Since a single flower yields just three threads, one small jar of saffron requires thousands upon thousands of flowers. That is an enormous amount of labor for a mere pinch of spice.

The spice is so powerful that a cook needs only a few threads, which are often soaked in warm water first so that the color can spread through an entire pot of rice.

Questions

1. What color does saffron give to food?

_____

_____

2. Which part of the saffron crocus is the spice itself?

_____

_____

3. How long do the flowers bloom each fall?

_____

_____

4. Why are the threads dried gently?

_____

_____

5. What makes saffron so expensive?

_____

_____

6. How do cooks spread saffron's color through a pot of rice?

_____

_____

Words to know

spice: a plant part that adds flavor or color to food
crocus: a small flower that grows from a bulb
bloom: to open into a flower
threads: thin strands, like pieces of string
pinch: a very small amount held between two fingers

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

Easier · 139 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.2

1. Golden yellow.
2. The three thin red threads inside the flower.
3. For a short time in the fall.
4. To keep their color and smell.
5. Each flower gives only three threads, and people pick them by hand.
6. They soak a few threads in warm water first.

Triangle: Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

This passage · 178 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.4

1. A golden yellow.
2. The three thin red threads inside the flower.
3. For a short time in the fall.
4. So they keep their color and their smell.
5. Each flower gives only three threads, and people must pick them by hand, so a small jar takes thousands of flowers.
6. They soak a few threads in warm water first.

Square: Saffron: The Spice Picked One Flower at a Time

Harder · 191 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.1

1. A brilliant golden yellow.
2. The three slender red threads inside each blossom.
3. For only a brief time.
4. So that they keep their color and their fragrance.
5. A flower yields just three threads and people must pluck them by hand, so a small jar needs thousands of flowers.
6. They soak a few threads in warm water first.