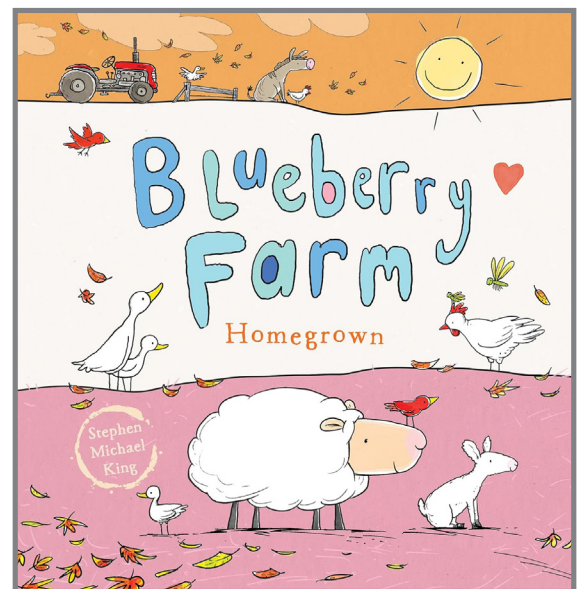


Blueberry Farm: Homegrown

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SYNOPSIS

The perfect time for planting. The perfect time for growth. The perfect time for dancing and eating honey toast.

Journey back to Blueberry Farm, from the award-winning creator of *Three*, *Rainbow Bear* and *Koala Ark*.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Stephen Michael King has been described as an artist who ‘draws from the inside out’, and it is this gentle, intuitive truth that gives heart and playfulness to his work. Stephen Michael King is an internationally renowned, award-winning author and illustrator whose career has spanned over thirty years, producing more than one hundred titles. He has worked with a stable of Australia’s best children’s book authors including Glenda Millard, Margaret Wild, Nick Bland, Peter Carey and Tim Winton. Books that Stephen Michael King has written and illustrated include: *Three*; *Rainbow Bear*; *Mutt Dog!*; *Leaf*; and *Milly, Jack and the Dancing Cat*. His books have been translated into over twenty languages, and he is frequently honoured in children’s book award categories—including winning the CBCA Book of the year, and the Prime Minister’s Literary Award.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What can you see happening on the cover of this book?
 - Where do you think the story is going to happen? Why do you think this?
 - Who do you think the characters in this story will be?
 - What do you think might happen in this story?
 - How does the picture on the cover of the book make you feel?
 - What words could you use to describe the location shown on the cover of the book?
 - What does it mean when we say something is homegrown?
- Look carefully at the page at the beginning of the book where it asks ‘Who will you meet today at Blueberry Farm?’ Which of these characters appear on the cover of the story? What are the different characters doing on the cover? Write a sentence for each character on the cover that tells us what their name is, what type of creature they are, and what they are doing.
- Look carefully at the artwork in the end pages of the story. How do these pictures make you feel? How do you think the characters shown in the pictures are feeling? Why do you think this?

- Choose four words you could use to describe these pictures, and at least one of your words should represent an emotion or feeling that someone might have when looking at them.
- Why does everyone have a blue face when they are picking blueberries? Visit a berry patch and pick some. Be sure to discuss the risks of berry picking, and take precautions to protect yourself from snakes, spiders, thorns, and other dangers. Remember, never pick or eat a berry if you don't know what it is! When you return to class, create a captioned artwork illustrating your berry-picking experience.
- Look at the picture of all the different foods that Blueberry Farm grows. Which of these do you like to eat? Which of these do you like the most? If you had to choose one meal or snack to eat made from the produce grown on Blueberry Farm, what would it be? Are there any foods here which you have never tried?
- Do you grow any fresh produce at your home? If so, what is it? Share with the class your experiences with growing fresh food.
- Plant a class garden. You can use raised garden beds purchased from a garden store, or you can make smaller raised beds from waxed cardboard boxes, old buckets or even milk crates lined with garbage bags and newspaper. If you don't have space for a garden bed, you can make a windowsill garden with lots of little pots. Old margarine tubs, ice-cream tubs, or even takeaway food containers can all make good pots for growing herbs, tomatoes or beans. An old bucket makes a good potato box—just remember to keep adding soil as the potatoes grow!
- When the first new buds appear, everyone on Blueberry Farm dances with happiness. What do you think the rest of their happiness dance would look like? In small groups, create a 'happiness at the buds appearing' dance of your own, set to a tune of your choice.
 - As a group talk about what type of music this scene in the story makes you think of. Once you have agreed on a type of music that you want to dance to, search online or in your family's music collection for an appropriate tune. You may want to ask your teacher or school librarian for help in finding a tune. Alternatively, discuss what type of music you would like, and ask your teacher to choose something.
 - Discuss what you think a happiness dance should look like. Share with each other your ideas about dance moves, and what might show happiness. Decide whether you also want to show the buds appearing in your dance. Choose the different moves that you want to include in your dance.
 - As a group decide who will do which move, and at what point in the music each move should occur. Practise your dance and perform it in front of the class. As a class, perform your dances at assembly or for another class.
- What do the plants in the story need to grow?
- On Blueberry Farm, they all do different things in the different seasons. They swim when it is warm, rug up when it is cold, and dance in the falling leaves in autumn. What are the different seasons where you live? Are they the same as the ones on Blueberry Farm, or are they different?
 - Look at an indigenous calendar from your local area, and discuss how it divides the year into seasons, and how these differ from the four seasons that are based on European weather patterns.
 - As a class, decide on how many seasons there are in your life, and where you live, and think of ways to describe them. What are all the different things that you do in different seasons? Think about what you do at home, and what you do at school at different times of year. Create a multi-panel artwork showing some of the different activities that you do in different seasons, and caption each panel with a description of the season, and the activity.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

RAE CARLYLE