

**Title of Session:** Nuts About Nature-Turkey on the Table, Turkey in the Tree

**Moderator:** Bill Hilton Jr.

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**BillHi** : Wow, look at all these nature nuts.

**BJ:** they're here to talk turkey, Bill

**BillHi** : Wow, it'll take us most of the hour just for introductions . . . .

**BJ:** Welcome to the Nuts About Nature discussion. Our discussion leader is Bill Hilton Jr.

**BJ:** Bill, shall we start with introductions?

**BillHi** : Please.

**VickiS:** I am an Athletic Trainer who is working on becoming a teacher

**BJ:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

**LuisA:** I am a pre-service teacher at the University of HOUSTON

**DonnaLC:** I'm a 7th grade science teacher working on certification.

**BJ:** for those who just entered, we're starting introductions

**DawnMW:** I'm a pre service teacher at Univ. of Houston-Humble cluster.

**AdrianB:** I'm a Yr3/4 teacher in Oz who is looking at what Tapped In has to offer

**LeslieA:** I am a pre-service teacher - 4th - 8th grade science

**JenniferW2:** Hi. I'm a pre-service teacher at the University of Akron in Akron Ohio

**JenniferRL:** I am a pre-service teacher from UofH

**RobinK:** pre-service at U of Houston high school science

**AmyMa:** I'm Amy ... pre-service teacher at UH ... trying to graduate very soon --- SBISD CLUSTER ... ec-4

**MayraC:** I am also a pre-service teacher form UH

**KristenDS:** I am also a preservice teacher in the Humble PUMA

**VanN:** I am too UH pre-service teacher.

**BJ** . o O ( I hope you will all keep greetings and cluster questions in the private message feature )

**BillHi** : Okay, a couple of guidelines here. No public posting of private messages between individuals.

**BillHi** : See, BJ and I think alike.

**BJ:** Thanks for the reminder, Bill

**SusanR:** I am a K to 8 Occasional teacher ...

**BJ:** Bill, I believe we're ready for you to start

**BillHi** : Okay. I'm Bill Hilton Jr. I taught high school & college biology for many years and for the last two decades have trained teachers (pre- and in-service) in how to teach science the "right" way.

**BillHi** : Right now I run an education/research/conservation organization in York SC called Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History.

**LeslieA:** Great Website!!

**JenniferRL:** I also enjoyed the website

**BillHi** : I'm particularly interested in teaching science across the curriculum and in getting students interested in the world of nature around them.

**BillHi** : This month's jumping off topic is "Turkey On The Table, Turkey In The Tree" in honor of Thanksgiving.

**BillHi** : In actuality, however, we can talk about anything that deals with nature and teaching kids about its wonders.

**BillHi** : To start, a question: Are there any natural history lessons that could be tied to Thanksgiving?

**RobinK**: It is amazing how many kids have no idea where their food comes from. I worked in a corn research field one summer and a high school kid thought corn came from a can

**BillHi** : So where DOES corn come from?

**LuisA**: from the ground

**MayraC**: wow!

**BillHi** : Like when it rains "cats and dogs"?

**AmyMa**: from a corn husk that comes from a plant that comes from the ground

**DonnaLC**: yes, from a plant

**LuisA**: that's what I meant

**RobinK**: ears of corn are the seeds that form after the pollination of the silks from the tassels ( I hand pollinated that summer for my internship)

**JenniferRL**: that's interesting, I bet that was an experience

**BillHi** : Okay, that was easy. Now we have a lesson on pollination. But where DID corn come from?

**LeslieA**: The Indians

**LuisA**: from complex carbons...

**SusanR**: The fact is that the word "corn" comes from a word, meaning "grain" and related to "kernel." In the USA, the Native Americans helped the European settlers plant maize (pronounced, "maze") that we later called "corn"

**AmyMa**: I don't know what pollination is ... but I know it did not come from Indians

**RobinK**: Was it a wild plant that the Indians cultivated?

**BillHi** : Okay, Robin is going the right direction.

**BillHi** : And Susan has a handle, also.

**LuisA**: so it was wild at first?

**LuisA**: wild , as in, it was just there

**BillHi** : Yes, that's the point. EVERYthing--or its ancestors--was wild at first.

**VickiS**: Did the Indians have other uses for corn, other than food purposes?

**GailMF** joined the room.

**DawnMW**: Wasn't it a grain that the Mexican Indians first planted thousands of years ago?

**LuisA**: yes, but where did they get the seed?

**BillHi** : Corn (formerly maize) was a small-grained plant that has been hybridized and cultivated into the big-eared yellow food we think of today.

**RobinK**: Wasn't that the big thing about the 1st Thanksgiving is that the Indians taught the settlers about native plants and animals that would help them survive

**BillHi** : So the story goes, Robin.

**VanN**: How about white corn?

**AmyMa:** and the brown and the orange that you see in the stores?

**BillHi :** It's just a hybrid variation.

**RobinK:** that is just a variety... I was an Ag major the 1st time around

**LuisA:** so it's un-natural?

**AmyMa:** like the maroon carrots that the Texas aggies created?

**BillHi :** All the corn we eat (or feed to livestock) is classified the same scientifically: Zea mays.

**RobinK:** not unnatural just planned cross breeding to get a specific end result

**BillHi :** by the way, that's a little botanical pun, since "maize" sounds like "mays".

**LuisA:** so really it is not natural, it was, in a way, designed by man

**AmyMa:** sounds like one of those words that the Aztec Indians said long ago in Mexico

**MayraC:** What does all this have to do with turkey

**AmyMa:** turkey eat corn

**RobinK:** Turkey was a native bird that the Indians also taught the settlers about

**BillHi :** Well, Mayra, ever seen a Wild Turkey?

**LeslieA:** I have

**MayraC:** yes

**JenniferRL:** I have up in Illinois

**BillHi :** How about a domesticated one?

**LeslieA:** At a farm as a child

**MayraC:** yes

**JenniferRL:** Me too

**AmyMa:** what's the difference between a turkey and a wild turkey?

**RobinK:** Where they live and what they eat

**BillHi :** So do you see a comparison between turkeys and corn from the preceding discussion?

**LuisA:** the wild turkey tastes better cuz they eat natural stuff...stuff without chemicals

**LeslieA:** a domesticated turkey is born in captivity

**JenniferRL:** turkey can be wild just like the food they eat

**DonnaLC:** I've never eaten a wild turkey.

**RobinK:** We have altered a lot of food products over the years

**AmyMa:** oh --- so like a wild turkey lives in the country and a 'reg. turkey' lives in a city with lots of food proteins to make them bigger .. the wild turkey eats grains .... I get it

**LuisA:** yep, the turkey we eat has a lot of chemicals that we put in their food to make them grow faster and fatter...

**LuisA:** and cheaper

**BillHi :** Not quite. Wild turkeys are to domesticated turkeys as maize is to modern corn-on-the-cob.

**AmyMa:** maybe that's why I don't eat turkey too much!

**JenniferRL:** okay I get it now

**DawnMW:** ohhh. I see the connection now.

**LuisA:** so maybe the turkey we eat does not really taste like turkey should really taste like

**SusanR:** Is the taste more gamey, Bill?

**LeslieA:** Wild turkeys are beautiful to watch

**BillHi :** Luis, quit thinking about food and think about nature.

**MayraC:** Most food is like that nowadays, Bill

**RobinK:** Breast are not as big that has been bred into domestic ones

**LuisA:** sorry Bill, I love turkey on thanksgiving

**BillHi :** me, too.

**KristenDS:** What is the lesson for the classroom from all this?

**BillHi :** Maybe Jennifer and Dawn can respond to that.

**LuisA:** the lesson is that we must think outside the box, we can easily tie in other things to something as simple as turkey

**GailMF:** That's what I want to know.

**DawnMW:** well....

**BillHi :** yes?

**AmyMa:** hmm ...my grandmother has 2 turkeys on her little chicken coop thing ... and she feeds them bread, maize, and corn ... but after I see them, I don't want to eat them ... I try to let them go in peace ... maybe Thanksgiving is all about making peace

**DawnMW:** I don't know the lesson, I just got the connection.

**BillHi :** Amy, that's a political thing. This is a nature study discussion.

**JenniferRL:** I think that we need appreciate all aspects of Thanksgiving

**AmyMa:** or an offering of some sort...

**KristenDS:** Are we to teach kiddos about wild turkeys versus domesticated turkeys?

**AmyMa:** or to appreciate what our forefathers have left for us to enjoy ...

**BillHi :** Still political.

**JenniferRL:** yes Amy

**LeslieA:** Thanksgiving began with people living in nature and learning to survive with nature

**BillHi :** Still political.

**DawnMW:** what is considered natural or nature vs. what is produced?

**VickiS:** I think that we need to teach kids not to take the "simple" things for granted

**AmyMa:** right and now the turkeys are living off nature and then we eat off nature (the turkey) ..

**RobinK:** How food plants have changed over time

**MayraC:** ok

**VanN:** good approach on food change over time.

**BillHi :** What kind of plant is corn?

**RobinK:** a grass

**AmyMa:** hybrid

**BillHi :** Robin is correct.

**AmyMa:** grass ?? so, oats are considered grass ?

**MayraC:** I thought it was a vegetable

**KristenDS:** I did not know that!

**BillHi :** That's correct, Amy.

**BillHi :** And wheat.

**DonnaLC:** a grass too?

**BillHi :** Yes.

**RobinK:** all cereal plants are grasses

**BillHi :** Correct.

**DonnaLC:** ok

**VanN:** so we focus on the type of plant than for the lesson.

**AmyMa:** so the corn plant is grass and the actual corn that comes from the husk is considered ?

**RobinK:** a seed

**KristenDS:** So this is the lesson!

**AmyMa:** oh Robin! .. dang ... I'm really thinking here !

**SusanR:** Corn is a grain

**AmyMa:** grain or seed?

**RobinK:** you can go a bunch of different ways

**MayraC:** It's a seed

**RobinK:** like broccoli is really a flower

**BillHi :** Okay, so if you asked a classroom of kids what kinds of animals eat grass, what would they say?

**RobinK:** and carrots are roots

**LuisA:** cows

**JenniferRL:** cows, horses

**JamieMP:** A cow

**LuisA:** turkeys???

**AmyMa:** goats, turkeys, chickens, horses, llamas, camels

**LuisA:** wild turkeys?

**RobinK:** rabbits

**MayraC:** farm animals

**RobinK:** my dog does

**KristenDS:** cows, horses, sheep

**BillHi :** Right on all counts, but they usually think about grazing animals.

**DonnaLC:** many animals

**LeslieA:** deer, bears, elk

**RobinK:** you could talk about the food chain because then who eats the animals that eat grass

**BillHi :** What do Pandas eat?

**JenniferRL:** I think that it makes her stomach feel better

**AmyMa:** pandas eat bamboo

**LuisA:** bamboo

**DawnMW:** bamboo?

**BillHi :** What kind of plant is bamboo?

**AmyMa:** another grass

**VanN:** grass

**LeslieA:** a grass

**JamieMP:** grass

**MayraC:** a grass

**KristenDS:** bamboo?

**RobinK:** Bamboo is the trunk/stem

**BillHi :** Right, bamboo is a grass.

**AmyMa:** .. and in Asia they use the grass to make buildings

**BillHi :** Now everybody stop for a minute.

**VanN:** that is true Amy.

**BillHi** : Think about the discussion so far, which started out with corn. What kinds of nature-based lessons could be created out of what we have just talked about?

**AmyMa**: lifecycle of plant, what animals eat ..

**RobinK**: Where you food comes from, food chains, maybe plant different things and observe them growing

**MayraC**: different seeds

**AmyMa**: food process

**KristenDS**: What types of foods are considered grasses and what or who consumes these items

**DawnMW**: food chains

**JenniferRL**: life cycle of any plant

**DonnaLC**: we use plants for many things

**BillHi** : Leave people out; think nature.

**RobinK**: history of plants

**LeslieA**: grazing animals, genetics in plants,

**BillHi** : Any more?

**KristenDS**: The history and origin of the foods we eat

**AmyMa**: for kinder? what kind?

**MayraC**: Yes, any for K?

**BillHi** : Okay, all of these are good, and all of them are adaptable for any age group.

**BillHi** : Is crabgrass a grass?

**VanN**: how?

**LuisA**: topics...a unit theme that ties in to one another??

**RobinK**: As far as I know it is

**AmyMa**: hmmm ... I don't think so ... it seems more of a fungus to me

**LeslieA**: it's a weed isn't it?

**JamieMP**: Isn't it a weed

**BillHi** : What's a weed?

**JamieMP**: crabgrass

**LeslieA**: Must be a grass too?

**RobinK**: A plant you don't want where it currently is growing

**JenniferRL**: I think it

**JenniferRL**: sorry, I think that it is a weed as well

**BillHi** : A weed is a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.

**AmyMa**: natural growing stuff you don't want in your flowerbed ... you have no control over it at all

**DonnaLC**: a plant we don't want

**MayraC**: what is a herb?

**LuisA**: "virtues have not yet been discovered"???

**LuisA**: what do you mean?

**AmyMa**: so if there is something that scientist don't know about yet ... they just label it 'weed'?

**BillHi** : No, you miss my point.

**RobinK**: Haven't found out What it is good for

**BillHi** : Stop again and think about kindergarten kids.

**MayraC**: like for food uses?

**RobinK:** a dandelion is a pretty flower to them not a weed

**LuisA:** see but kids see a weed and they label it plant

**BillHi :** Do you suppose there is any school in the country that doesn't have crabgrass on the grounds somewhere?

**RobinK:** Maybe AZ

**BillHi :** Maybe.

**JenniferRL:** Sure

**SusanR:** My students always give me dandelions in the spring!!

**AmyMa:** oh yeah ... we have it here in west Texas .... there is only rock and dust

**DawnMW:** Most school probably have it.

**LeslieA:** Weeds have a purpose when you are a kid...you can blow a dandelion in the wind. The produce flowers to give to your mom. They make stickers to pull out of your feet.

**VanN:** is this relate to turkey?

**BillHi :** We're talking about crabgrass, not dandelions.

**AmyMa:** is crabgrass that grass that grows all around and it grows like spider webs on the ground?

**JenniferRL:** Is it because most students do not think about what is and what is not a plant

**BillHi :** Horizontal spiderwebs?

**RobinK:** Crabgrass fills in voids where nothing else will grow due to soil conditions

**KristenDS:** I am not sure that I exactly know what crabgrass is

**BillHi :** If so, yes.

**AmyMa:** umm sort of ... yeah ... I guess you would call it that ... but -- there is a lot of it and REAL HARD to tear with your hands ..

**BillHi :** But you DO know what grass looks like in general, don't you Kristen?

**RobinK:** very strong root system needs less water than most grasses

**KristenDS:** I think so.

**SusanR:** I understand crabgrass may be able to clean up soils heavily contaminated with petroleum.

**BillHi :** Okay, so you take the students out and have them get down and look at the crabgrass (or other grass) and they find the seeds.

**AmyMa:** ok ... I got it ... I have a question .... I have a house here in Houston -- very humid area ... and not a lot of crabgrass --- and a house in Galveston --- on the beach the air is very salty ... there is tons more of crabgrass there, but not here ... why??

**BillHi :** Amy, stop.

**BillHi :** We're trying to come to closure here.

**RobinK:** teaching the kids to be more observant?

**DonnaLC:** all plants are important?

**BillHi :** Crabgrass is to seeds as Zea mays is to . . . .?

**KristenDS:** okay, I'm following you.

**AmyMa:** corn

**LuisA:** corn

**JenniferRL:** Corn

**DawnMW:** corn

**MayraC:** corn

**ShannonMN:** Corn

**JenniferW2:** corn

**DonnaLC:** yes, corn

**BillHi :** So aren't seeds (including corn) something you could work with K kids on?

**LeslieA:** definitely

**RobinK:** sprout beans

**JenniferRL:** absolutely

**BillHi :** And aren't seeds part of nature?

**JenniferRL:** yes

**JamieMP:** yes

**ShannonMN:** Yes

**DawnMW:** yes. definitely

**JenniferW2:** yes

**DonnaLC:** yes

**BillHi :** And aren't seeds part of plant anatomy?

**RobinK:** of course all plants come from seeds of some sort

**JenniferRL:** yes

**KristenDS:** absolutely!

**DonnaLC:** yes

**ShannonMN:** They sure are. Good connection!

**BillHi :** And aren't seeds associated with the various seasons?

**JenniferRL:** I see where this is going

**MayraC:** do you have any lesson plans to do this?

**BillHi :** That's your job, Mayra.

**DonnaLC:** yes

**AmyMa:** like flowers in the spring? and pine cones in the fall?

**BillHi :** So what do seeds have to do with turkeys?

**KristenDS:** Yes. there are certain times to plant certain foods.

**AmyMa:** if we don't have seeds, turkeys don't eat

**VanN:** as food for turkeys.

**ShannonMN:** Life Cycle

**BillHi :** Good, Amy, and that's true for wild AND domesticated turkeys.

**JenniferRL:** seeds are a food source

**RobinK:** harvest time/thanksgiving time

**KristenDS:** Ah ha!

**BillHi :** I love it when you say "Ah ha!"

**LeslieA:** do turkeys drop the seeds as they migrate to make more grasses

**BillHi :** Yes, Leslie, another lesson in itself.

**LeslieA:** Cool

**AmyMa:** that is nature within itself

**RobinK:** hitchhiking seeds

**MayraC:** ok

**BillHi :** Okay. Your minds should be full of ideas now. Everybody stop for a second.

**LuisA:** ok

**BillHi :** I want you to look at a photo of the backside of a Wild Turkey on my Web site for Hilton Pond Center. it's at <http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek031101.html>



**AmyMa:** now?

**BillHi :** Click on the link.

**LuisA:** wow...they are small!!!

**BillHi :** Okay, I was just kidding about it being a Wild Turkey. it's actually a Winter Wren.

**BillHi :** I just wanted to get you over to the Web site so you can bookmark it and spend some time browsing around.

**LeslieA:** It is already in my favorites

**BillHi :** Bookmark it before you go.

**JenniferRL:** I really like the website

**BillHi :** Thanks, Jennifer.

**DonnaLC:** It's a beautiful bird.

**JenniferRL:** I was wondering why it seemed small

**SusanR:** Can I expect to see the wren around Ontario this winter, Bill?

**ShannonMN:** I have it book-marked

**RobinK:** Thanks a lot Bill I really enjoyed this discussion just like last month. This is the kind of science I want to do with my future classes

**BillHi :** Nope, they leave Ontario in winter and come south.

**BillHi :** Thanks, Robin. You'll do well.

**JenniferW2:** Thank you for the interesting discussion tonight!

**AmyMa:** wow --- beautiful ... I'm a bird lover!

**DawnMW:** thanks for the great insight on turkeys-corn-crabgrass and the connection among them.

**JenniferRL:** Bill, you really gave us some great ideas, thank you for your time

**SusanR:** Thanks Bill. Thoughtful discussion!

**BillHi :** You, bet. Thanks to everyone who's still here for the good discussion.

**DonnaLC:** Thanks Bill, I enjoyed the discussion.

**LeslieA:** Bill, thank you for being here for us. Can I ask about the humming birds?

**BillHi :** Go ahead, Leslie.

**AmyMa:** can I ask about crabgrass real quick?

**BillHi :** Yes, Amy.

**LeslieA:** We have red rousus at our place in Colorado...do you want that are tracked also or is it to common

**BillHi :** What time of year, Leslie?

**LeslieA:** Summer

**AmyMa:** ok ... the same question as before ... humid here -- not a lot of growing here where I really need it and in Galveston --- long the coast ... there is so much that you can't control it ... does it have to do with the air ... or the ground or what?

**BillHi :** Since that's they're normal breeding range, there's nothing of specific interest. It's these Rufous Hummingbirds that are spending the winter that we're trying to figure out.

**LeslieA:** Ok I look when I go back but I am sure it is too cold. Two weeks ago I still had the regular green ones

**BillHi :** Amy, I think you're probably right about humidity and available moisture.

There's ANOTHER lesson for the kids.

**LeslieA:** in my back yard in Houston

**BillHi :** Any hummingbird in or east of the Rockies after 15 October is of interest.

**AmyMa:** ok .. thanks ... Bill ... you have a nice night

**BillHi :** By the way. female and young male Rufous Hummingbirds are not red, they're green and white.

**BillHi :** You, too, Amy.

**LeslieA:** Great I will pay attention and let you know!!! Thanks again. So what are the red ones called who are bullies and hog the feeders?

**AmyMa** left the room.

**BillHi :** These are the adult males.

**KristenDS:** Thanks Bill, have a good night.

**BillHi :** Sweet dreams, Kristen.

**LeslieA:** OK Thanks...I look out for them...have a nice night!

**BillHi :** Night, Leslie.

**BillHi :** And goodbye to everyone else, and thanks to BJ for moderating.

**BillHi :** Folks can contact me with other questions at [education@hiltonpond.org](mailto:education@hiltonpond.org)

**SusanR:** Goodnight Bill, stimulating conversations!

**BillHi :** Thanks Susan. The Tree House discussion is officially closed. Happy Thanksgiving!