

AMAZING PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The life of Tillie Lewis, who built a Stockton-based food empire

By Estrella Ortiz
HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

The daughter of Austrian Jewish immigrants, Tillie Ehrlich-Weisberg Lewis was born on July 13, 1901 in Brooklyn, New York. She started off living a normal childhood. When she was 14, she was working at the Garment District. In 1916, she married Louis Weisberg. She introduced the Italian pomodoro tomato to Stockton, California.

She established tomato canning and other plants and vegetables in the San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. Louis was a member of a wholesale grocery business that imported pomodoro tomatoes.

When her marriage ended, Tillie traveled to Italy where she canned tomatoes in Naples. She returned to Stockton, California and begged farmers to try to experiment raising tomatoes. Then she tried to persuade Pacific Can Company to try to build a plant in Stockton with an option for her to buy it.

By 1940, she made the San Joaquin County the top tomato producing County in the United States. Tillie met Del Gaizo and formed Flotfill Foods Corporation. When Del Gaizo died in 1937, Tillie borrowed money from the company and became the owner of Flotfill Foods.

Over the next decade, she began canning spinach, asparagus and other plants. Flotfill Foods also canned

food, baby food, and juice.

During World War II, Flotfill Foods was the largest Army C-Ration supplier in the nation. Because of the great experience in World War II, they were selected again in the Korean War and became one of the largest ration assemblers for the military.

When the agricultural industry faced shortages due to World War II, Tillie sponsored Mexican workers to assist Stockton farmers through the bracero program.

Tillie then met Meyer Lewis, who was an American Federation of Labor organizer. In 1940, Meyer helped her make an agreement for a contract with her employees.

In 1941, Tillie signed what she

called "the first full union contract in the history of agricultural labor of the United States." Keeping her company strike free, while other companies dealt with struggles.

Tillie fell in love with Meyer and got married with him seven years later. In 1952, Tillie launched Tasti-Diet Foods, a line of artificially sweetened foods. By 1953, a menu based entirely about Tasti-Diets was available at the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York.

Tillie then became the center of advertising campaigns, constructing a story of a woman who had dealt with weight issues and developed a solution to share with other women. Tillie's success was told in articles in Time, Parade: The Sunday Pic-

ture Magazine, Everywoman's Woman and Readers Digest.

In 1951, Tillie was named "Business Woman of The Year" by Associated Press. She changed the name of her company to Tillie Lewis Foods and began selling shares on the American Stock Exchange in 1961. Tillie Lewis Foods combined in with Ogden Foods (now part of Pet, Inc) of New York City in 1966.

Tillie was selected the first woman director of Ogden Foods. By 1971, Tillie Lewis Foods had sales over 90 M per year. Her husband (Meyer Lewis) died in 1976 and Tillie Lewis died on April 30, 1977, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage.

Animals we've studied

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Facts about asparagus

By Gabriel Lobato Martinez
HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

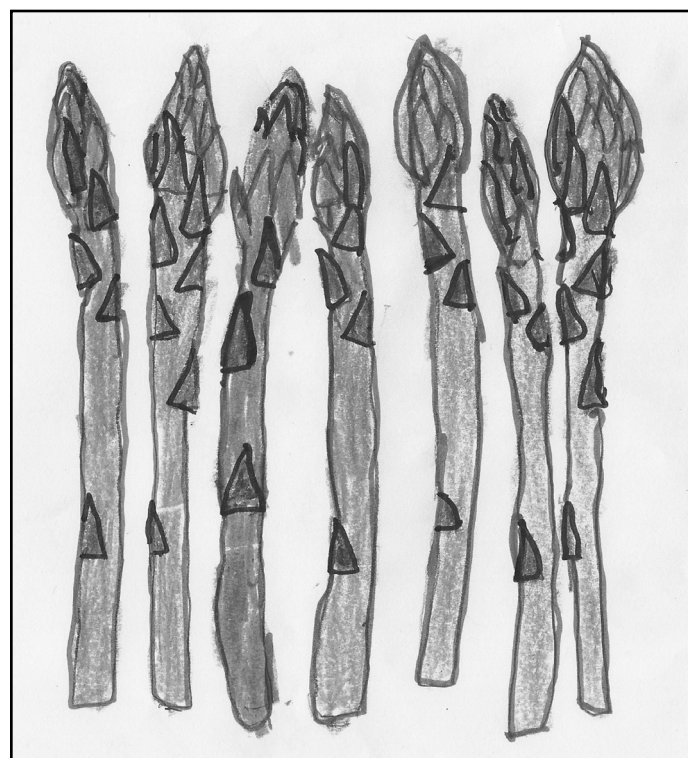
Asparagus comes in three colors: green, white and purple. Yes, purple!

Asparagus can grow to be 4 to 5 feet tall.

California, Michigan and Washington are the major asparagus producing states in the United States. Due to labor costs, however, much of the asparagus we eat comes from other countries. The US is the top asparagus importer.

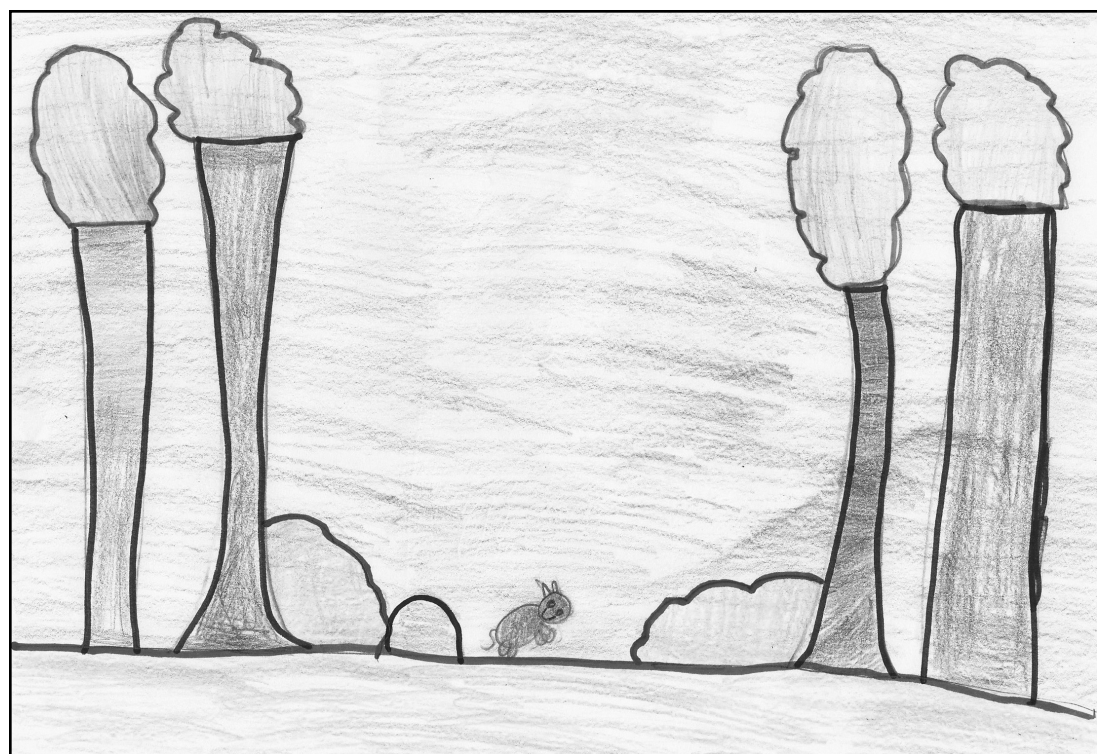
The name Asparagus comes from the Greek language meaning "sprout" or "shoot".

Asparagus is related to the onion, leeks, and garlic.

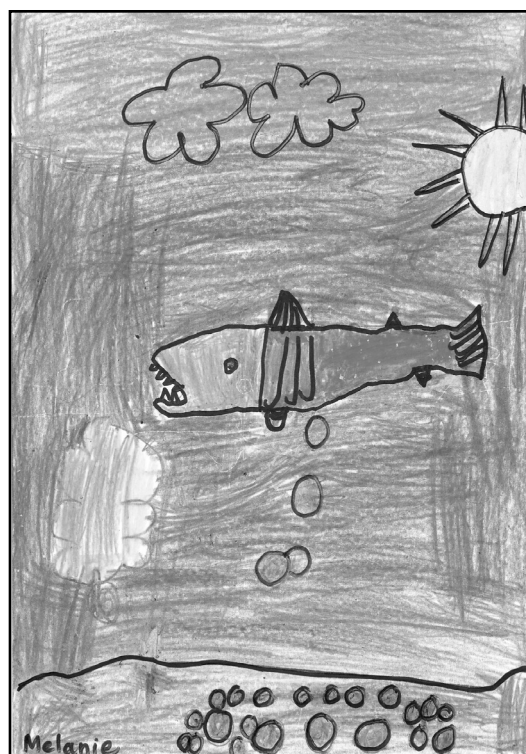


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Wild art and games



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WORD BANK

- Bear
- Foxes
- Salmon
- Willow
- Bee
- Frogs
- Tule
- Deer
- Oak
- Watershed

Carpenter Bees

By Alexandra Cruz
HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

Carpenter Bees buzz like saws when they make their nests. In fact, that is how they got their name. However, they do not saw or eat the wood.

The bees depend on flowering plants, feeding on nectar, with the females collecting pollen for their offspring.

The female Carpenter bee has a dark face. Carpenter bees can sting, but they rarely do.

Amazing cherry facts

By Linos Flores
HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

The English colonists brought cherries to North America in the 1600s.

A cherry tree can grow 33 feet in height.

The word cherry comes from the French word "cerise."

There are more than 1,000 varieties of cherries in the United States, but fewer than 10 are produced commercially.

May 26 is National Cherry Dessert Day.

On average there are about 44 cherries in one pound.

Tomatoes

By Junior Mendoza Rodriguez
HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

Tomatoes are believed to be native to the Americas.

Tomatoes are the state fruit of New Jersey.

The biggest tomato fight in the world happens each year in the small Spanish town of Bunol. The festival is called La Tomatina. It involves 40,000 people throwing 150,000 tomatoes at each other.

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