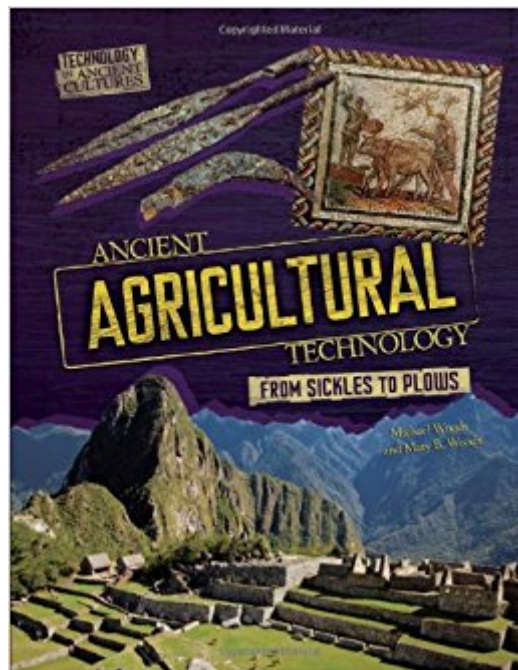




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Ancient Agricultural Technology: From Sickles To Plows (Technology In Ancient Cultures)



Synopsis

Learn about the tools farmers have used throughout human history.

Book Information

Series: Technology in Ancient Cultures

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Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 7 - 10

Customer Reviews

Mary B. Woods is an elementary school librarian in the Fairfax County (VA) Public School system. She has presented at international librarians' conferences. Mary is the researcher on the Woods team, and Michael is the writer. They have written almost 40 books.

When many people think of technology, they seldom think of technological advances in agriculture. The technology associated with farming did not happen overnight, but rather occurred with inventions and discoveries that took place over tens of thousands of years. Technology can be defined as "the use of knowledge, inventions, and discoveries to make life better." Perhaps if we added the word 'easier' the definition could be expanded to fit the needs of ancient hunter-gatherers. Large portions of their days were taken up with the search of food, a search that meant survival. When they were able to find or develop "new tools to assist them in hunting and gathering," it made their jobs much easier and ensured their survival. Spears, bows, arrows, stone knives, nets, and things such as fish hooks enabled ancient people to not only survive, but to

thrive. People learned to not only hunt and gather their food, but also how to store and preserve it. For example "ancient hunter-gatherers sometimes treated fish with wood smoke" and even learned how to preserve food in snow and ice. Once a constant food supply could be counted on, populations began to settle down and civilizations began to emerge. One of the first things that was needed "on the road to agriculture was domesticating animals." The domestication of plants soon followed as "people learned to grow the plants they needed." Hunter-gatherers no longer needed to spend their days scrounging for food, but rather used their ingenuity to create a continuous food source. In this book you will learn how the hunter-gathers contributed to the beginnings of agricultural technology and then you'll be treated to a whirlwind tour around the world. You'll get a glimpse at several civilizations and will learn about the emergence of important advances. In the Middle East you'll read about how "people settled down and grew grain," how they domesticated animals, bred them for "desirable traits," invented the plow and shadoof, used kitchens, invented the potter's wheel, and "used simple hand-operated looms." You'll read about ancient Egyptians and learn how they discovered and improved upon the farming technology from the Middle East. The Egyptians "began to build irrigation systems," you'll learn about how they became the first beekeepers, and learned to make wine and beer. Similarly you'll also get a close look at the Greek, Chinese, Roman, and ancient American civilizations, and learn how they too contributed to the advance of agricultural technology. This is a fascinating overview of worldwide ancient agricultural technology for the young adult audience. It's a daunting task to write about agricultural technology without becoming bogged down with an overabundance of factual material, but the author did a nice job by condensing this material and culling out the most important advances. The emphasis was on ancient civilizations, but briefly touched on more modern advances in farming technology in the epilogue. There were many photographic and art reproductions that were primarily archaeological in nature. A map, including a key, shows where the ancient civilizations emerged and are referenced in the book. Numerous informative sidebars and quotations add to the fun and interest of the text. For example, one goes into depth about the history of salt and claims that "salt was so important that ancient peoples even used pieces of salt as money." In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, a timeline (CA. 400,000 B.C to 2010), source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book and websites to explore. There are free downloadable educational materials that can be accessed on the publisher's website. This book courtesy of the publisher.

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