



Author Spotlight with

JACQUELINE FARMER

Did you enjoy reading as a child?

I read constantly as a child. My mother and sister accused me of using reading to get out of helping with the dishes, but I was totally absorbed as I read. Of course, like most of my generation, I started with the *Bobbsey Twins* series by Laura Lee Hope, worked my way through *Cherry Ames*, *Student Nurse* by Helen Wells and Julie Tatham, and graduated to the *Nancy Drew* mysteries by Carolyn Keene. I loved these books because the main characters were very likable. I saw myself as a friend, participating in adventures right alongside them. Because the books were part of a series, I always knew that more excitement and mystery awaited me at the library.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a riding instructor. I couldn't think of anything better than spending all my time around horses. Like many young girls, I thought horses were the most exciting and beautiful of all creatures. I read every horse story I could get my hands on. On my ninth birthday, I got my first horse, Apache, and began riding lessons. Two years later, I rode in my first horse show and won second place in horsemanship. From that moment, riding consumed my life. By the time I was fourteen, I was riding in New York City every November in the National Equitation Finals at Madison Square Garden.

Unfortunately my riding career ended when I turned 18. I was considered too old to compete. I decided to be more practical with my future aspirations. I studied to be a school counselor at the University of Pennsylvania, but fate took me in other directions.

Where did fate take you?

I married shortly after I graduated, and had two wonderful children. My husband's job took our family all over Southeast Asia—Malaysia, Indonesia, Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, India, and Tibet. We even lived in Thailand for two unforgettable years. My favorite trip took me and five girlfriends from Calcutta to Darjeeling in the northeast part of India. We rode a train through tea farms and stayed at a hotel that overlooked Annapurna, the third-highest mountain in the Himalayas. Looking into the valley we saw a large Buddhist monastery surrounded by prayer flags flapping in the wind.

Pink Lady



Rome Beauty



Golden Delicious



Fuji



McIntosh



Granny Smith



Red Delicious



Gala



How did you become an author?

Becoming a children's book author was really a fluke. I was working at Charlesbridge when someone suggested doing a book about bananas. The banana industry was celebrating the 100th anniversary of the international banana trade. The question was, 'who would write the book?' Since I'm a "can do" kind of person, I thought immediately that I would enjoy the challenge. To my surprise, my offer to write *Bananas!* was accepted.



What was the most interesting thing you learned while researching *Apples*?

I am always amazed by the historical footprint each fruit left on civilizations from thousands of years ago. In my research for *Apples*, I was surprised to learn that Johnny Appleseed actually planted formal, fenced orchards that he cared for as he traveled around the Midwest. I thought he carried a sack full of seeds that he handed out to the homesteaders he met on his travels. I hope readers find something new and surprising in each book, and that they will share that information with others.

What is your favorite fruit?

My favorite fruit is cantaloupe, but bananas, pumpkins, and apples are very close behind.

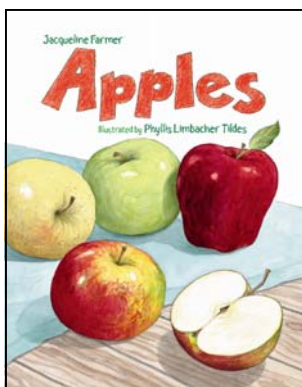
What is the secret to baking the perfect apple pie?

The secret to baking anything is learning how your baked goods look, feel, and sound when they are perfectly done. For example, you should remove a cake from the oven when it looks done, feels done, and is still making slight crackling sounds. Oven temperatures vary, your measurements may not be accurate, or maybe you had to use extra-large eggs because that was all you had. Following the recipe timing guidelines might leave you with an overdone cake or underbaked cookies. So pay attention. Learn the look, feel, and sound technique, and you'll bake like a pro.

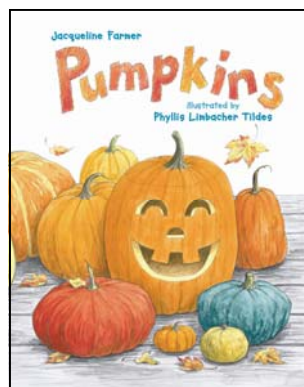
You are a strong supporter of organizations that protect wildlife and the environment. How did you become involved in Greensboro Beautiful?

Greensboro Beautiful is a wonderful organization based in Greensboro, North Carolina, where I live, that is committed to replacing trees that are disappearing due to development or simply old age. The group also organizes regular cleanups of the city streets, rivers, and neighborhoods, as well as taking responsibility for several special planting projects in the downtown area. I became involved with Greensboro Beautiful after I organized a group to pull out the brambles that were choking the trees at the edge of our lake, Lake Jeanette. Needless to say, it was a thorny job.

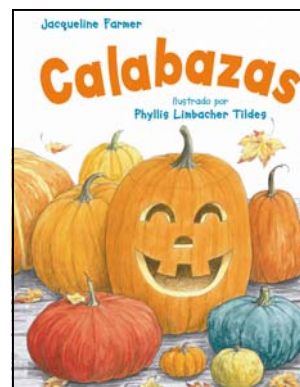
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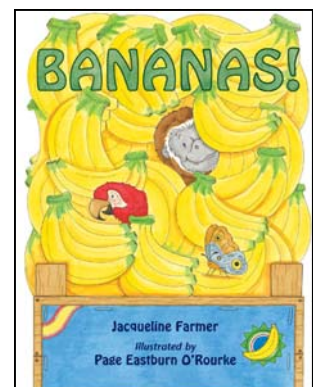
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