

Lost in a Corn Maze

by Laurie Wallmark



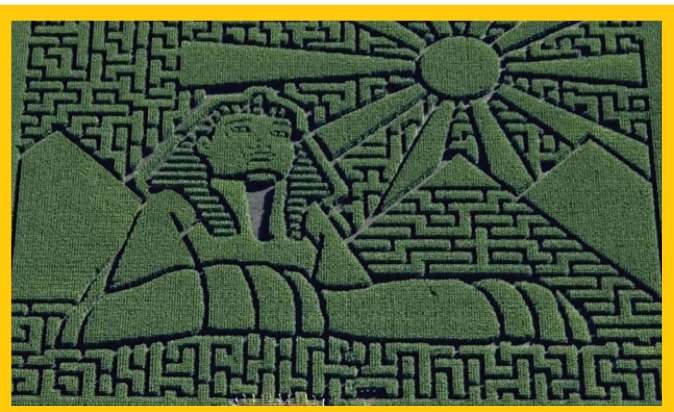
DARKNESS HAS FALLEN, and the full moon casts blue-gray shadows around you. You shine your flashlight at the ten-foot tall cornstalks towering above your head. With every step, dried cornhusks crunch beneath your feet. You walk along paths filled with turns, loops, and dead ends. You hear laughter and voices, but no one is in sight. You're lost in a corn maze.

A corn maze is a large, walk-through puzzle carved into a cornfield. Seen from above, its winding paths may form a picture—anything from Halloween monsters to fire-breathing dragons, flying saucers to pirate ships, or sports heroes to scary witches.

A farmer may enlist the help of a maze designer to create these amazing images. The designer begins with a



If I Only Had a Brain, Meridian, Idaho



Sphinx, Shakopee, Minnesota

GROOO!
FLOOOT!
ARRG!



A ZOMBUGGY!
RUNNNN!



Cornelius,
The Cobasaurus,
Annaville,
Pennsylvania



Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Cone,
Manlius, New York

sketch, drawn either by hand or on a computer. The design is then plowed into a corn field using hoes, tractors, or lawn mowers. Many designers use a digital device called a Global Positioning System, or GPS, to guide their cutting.

Although today's corn mazes may get a boost from modern technology, people have been designing, building, and getting lost in mazes for thousands of years. Mazes first appeared in Greek mythology; the most famous was the labyrinth at Knossos, home of the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull monster. In the Middle Ages, gardeners built "puzzle hedges" in European castle gardens to amuse the royal court. By the 19th century, mazes had become a popular form of entertainment all over the world.

In 1993, producer Don Frantz and designer Adrian Fisher built the world's first corn maze in Annaville, Pennsylvania. Their dino-shaped creation, "Cornelius, The Cobasaurus," sparked a corn maze craze—there are now approximately one thousand corn mazes across the United States, and corn mazes on every continent except for frosty Antarctica.



Today you can still stroll through the Hampton Court Maze in Surrey, England, built in 1690.



Lost in Space, Hatley, Wisconsin

HOW DO WE ESCAPE THIS MAGAZINE???



IT'S LIKE A LABYRINTH. A PLACE DESIGNED TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO FIND ONE'S WAY AROUND! A LAB-ER-INTH OF TERROR!

SPIDER, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE IN KNOSSOS, A PALACE ON THE GREEK ISLAND OF CRETE.



THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY OUT!





Crazy Train Maze, Ringoes, New Jersey

A partially punched Crazy Train Maze game card (say it three times fast!)

New Jersey, Pennsylvania's neighbor to the east, features many mazes with hidden challenges. In the Crazy Train Maze, you'll get a map marked with checkpoints that indicate where you can punch holes in your game card. If your card is completely punched by the time you reach the exit, you might win a prize such as a balloon ride. In Howell Farm's Corn Maze, you should follow every path (including dead ends) to hunt down puzzle pieces that form a map of the maze. And stay alert for answers to the trivia quiz, which is based on the maze's theme. If you finish your quiz the fastest and win the most points, you are proclaimed the King or Queen of the Maze.

But even the best maze-runners can get stuck, so farmers at the West Portal Pumpkin Patch post signs to help you find your way. At Howell Farm, colorful ribbons tied between the cornstalks mark different areas of the maze; you can color your map to match and then plot your location. A "maze guard" also watches from a tower, high above the corn field. Shout up to her or wave your colored flag above the cornstalks. She'll yell down a clue. And if you're lost in the Crazy Train Maze, experienced "corn cops" are there to serve and protect you.



Witch Way Out? Billings, Montana

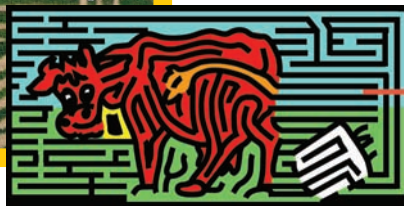


The Headless Horseman, Canton, Mississippi

It takes about 200,000 cornstalks to make an average-sized, four-acre corn maze—that's about the size of three football fields!



Cow Maze, Titusville, New Jersey



This color-coded maze map will never "steer" you wrong.

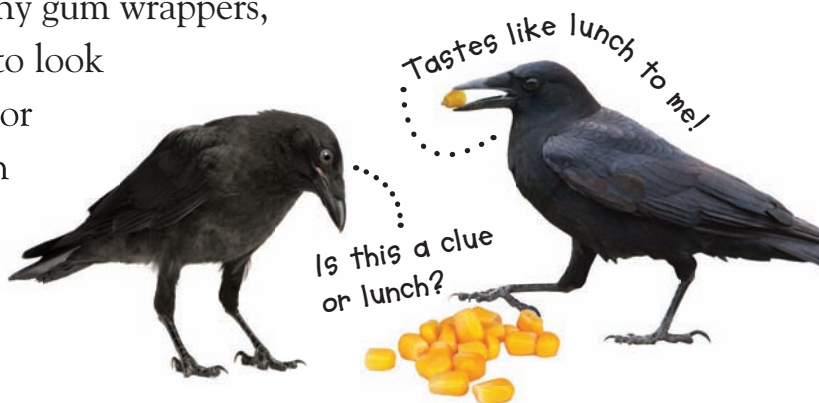
Corn Cop to the rescue!



Every adventurer has a different maze-solving strategy. Some people just charge in and hope for the best. Others remember the location of a hill, a tall tree, the sun, or the moon. Another approach is to use the "right-hand rule." Whenever you see a path going to the right, follow it. Sooner or later, you'll reach an exit.

Corn maze architect Matt Miller says, "Eight- to ten-year-olds are one of the best age groups for navigating a maze. They remember a gum wrapper on the ground, a footprint, or a bent cornstalk. It's noticing these little details that give the kids that 'maze intuition.'"

Funny—you don't recall seeing any gum wrappers, and all those cornstalks are starting to look the same. But never fear. One way or another, you won't be lost in a corn maze forever. You'll find your way out . . . eventually. 🕷️



Get lost in some mind-boggling mazes at www.spidermagkids.com/puzzlesgames!

WE NEED A STRATEGY, A PLAN FOR ACHIEVING A GOAL, FOR ESCAPING ZOMBUGGIES!



MY DAMSELFLY INTUITION, FEELING ABOUT SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED, TELLS ME THAT IF WE KEEP RUNNING TO THE RIGHT, WE'LL FIND AN EXIT!