

Demeter facts

Encyclopedia Facts

Quick Facts

Demeter: Goddess of agriculture, harvest, fertility, and sacred law.

Home: Mount Olympus

Symbols: Cornucopia, wheat, torch, bread

Children: Persephone, Despoina, Arion, Plutus, Philomelus, Eubuleus, Chrysothemis

Parents: Cronus and Rhea

Siblings: Hestia, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus, Chiron

Demeter is the Greek goddess of the harvest and farming. She is one of the [Twelve Olympians](#), the most important gods and goddesses in [Greek mythology](#).

Demeter is the older sister of [Zeus](#), the king of the gods. She is in charge of grains and makes the earth fertile. Farmers look up to her as their special goddess. People believe she teaches humans how to grow crops and harvest them.

Demeter is the mother of [Persephone](#), whose father is Zeus. Persephone is the wife of Hades, the god of the underworld.

Demeter's symbols include the [scythe](#), a [cornucopia](#) (horn of plenty), [wheat](#), and [bread](#). Her sacred animals are the [pig](#) and the [snake](#).

The Story of Persephone and the Seasons

The most famous myth about Demeter is the story of her daughter, Persephone. Hades, the god of the underworld, kidnaps Persephone to make her his wife. Demeter is heartbroken and searches everywhere for her daughter. Her sadness causes a great famine on Earth. Nothing grows, and people begin to starve. To save all life, Zeus sends his messenger, [Hermes](#), to the underworld. He tells Hades to bring Persephone back.

Hades agrees, but only if Persephone eats nothing in his realm. Unfortunately, Persephone eats a few [pomegranate](#) seeds. Because of this, she spends part of each year in the underworld. The rest of the year, she stays with her mother.

This cycle explains why we have seasons. When Persephone is with Hades, Demeter grieves, and the earth becomes cold and barren (autumn and winter). When Persephone returns to her mother, Demeter is happy, and the earth becomes fertile and full of life (spring and summer).

LISTEN!



A marble statue of Demeter, national Roman Museum