

Why the maze craze is taking over fields

Ben Lammas reports from somewhere in a maze
The maze craze is taking over fields across the region. The concept is simple. Plant your maize crop in intricate patterns, wait for it to grow, charge visitors to get lost and then harvest the whole lot and sell it at a profit.

No wonder that what began as a national novelty a few years ago has turned into a huge tourism industry that has seen three large attractions cropping up in the West Midlands this summer. The giant maize maze at Kinver is among the latest attractions for families to fight their way out of during the school holidays.

Farmer Ian Sadler, of Sandy Lane, has been growing the maze for the last four months and opened it to the public this weekend.

The maze on his land near to Kinver Edge stretches over 2.5 acres and the walls of maize stand at more than six feet tall.

It cost Mr Sadler, who runs The Kinver Shop, £6,000 to create and is made up of an amazing 120,000 plants. But despite the cost the farmer said it was all worth it and is now looking forward to families coming to test it out over the summer.

He said: "We started planning it all at Christmas and then did the planting in April, it grows pretty quickly and looks really good now. "It is not just for kids either, it is a good bit of exercise and keeps you fit, so anyone can come down and try it out."

Meanwhile, The Maize Maze in Bednall, near Stafford covers five acres and was planted by Carol and Henry Bloxam.

Mr Bloxam said: "It started over in America. It hasn't got a particular theme; it's just a random 'get lost' path."

Another maze has been created at Essington Fruit farm where visitors can



Express & Star reporter Ben Lammas navigates the maze at Kinver Edge

Amazed by maize trivia

Armed with my maize maze question sheet and wondering whether I would navigate my way out before dark I ventured into Kinver's hottest crop attraction, writes Ben Lammas.

Not expecting the maize to have grown so tall in such a short time, I thought the challenge it would be a doddle. Not so. The 120,000 plants put in four months ago have sprung up to over six feet and once inside it is entirely down to your navigational skills, which in my case are non-existent.

Of course it wasn't long before I was taking wrong turn after wrong turn and

The Kinver Shop, Kinver Edge

Cost: £3.50 children, £4.50 adults, £4 students. Open: 11am to 5pm

edge about Australia along the way with a string of down-under trivia to offer clues. After re-treading my steps a few more times I decided to latch onto a couple who seemed to be having a lot more luck than myself in reaching the elusive Ayres Rock finale. Fortunately for me their navigational skills were slightly better honed and they made it out of the maize maze