Triangle Native American Society
Wake County Title VII Indian Education Program
Community Garden Project
Healthy, Native North Carolinians

In partnership with the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs and the American Indian Center at UNC Chapel Hill, and with funding from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, *Triangle Native American Society* and the *Wake County Title VII Indian Education Program* collaborated on the Healthy, Native North Carolinians community garden project. The three goals of the project were:

- Improve community awareness of healthy eating habits
- Promote awareness of plants grown by Native North Carolinians
- Increase community awareness and access to physical activities
Plants from the Americas

• All of the plants in the spring/summer garden were from either North or South America.

• Some of the plants are common in gardens around the country (corn, beans and squash), but others (Amaranth and Quinoa) are not normally grown for food

• A few of the plants are usually just grown in commercial agriculture (cotton, sweet potatoes, peanuts)

• A couple of the varieties are not grown frequently today, but were grown before contact with Europeans (Seminole pumpkin, Cherokee flour corn, Tooth corn)
Plant Varieties for 2012 Garden

**Corn:** Gourdseed/Tooth, Cherokee Flour, Smoke Signal

**Beans:** Trail of Tears, Shield Bean, Painted Pony, Calico

**Squash/Pumpkin:** Yellow Crookneck, Summer, Seminole

**Sunflower:** Arikara and others

**Tobacco:** Caribbean type

**Cotton:** Short staple variety

**Sweet Potato:** Covington

**Peanut:** Carwiles Virginia

**Tomato:** Cherokee Purple, Better Boy, Lemon, Green Zebra

**Pepper:** Cayenne, Jalapeno, Hungarian Wax, Banana

**Quinoa:** White (specific variety unknown)

**Amaranth:** Leaf type
The Three Sisters

Corn (Zea mays)
Multiple varieties grown by American Indians including the types: Flour, Flint, Dent and Popcorn. Fresh corn was eaten, but most corn was processed into hominy, mush (like grits) or as flour.

Beans (Phaseolus spp.)
Beans such as navy, black, green, lima, are from the Americas. Pole, bush and semi-bush habit. Beans were eaten fresh, but mostly dried as a year-round food supply.

Squash/Pumpkin (Cucurbita spp.)
All varieties of squash and pumpkin were originally from the Americas. There are thousands of varieties with different shapes, colors, and textures. Summer and Winter squash are eaten fresh or dried.

Sunflowers (Helianthus annuus)
One of the first crops cultivated in North America by Indian communities. Seeds eaten, but mostly pounded into flour.

FIGURE 1 - Woodcut of maize from De historia stirpium of Leonhard Fuchs (1542).
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea batatas)
A root, not a tuber like potatoes. Tropical plant with a vine habit grown in sandy soil. Sweet Potatoes are not yams which are from Africa.

Peanut (Arachis hypogaea)
A legume that grows underground from shoots from the flower called pegs. The peg push into the ground and a peanut grows from the end. South American plant came to the US from the Caribbean and Africa.

Tomato (Solanum lycopersicum)
A South American plant that was domesticated in Mexico. Over 7000 varieties are grown. It is technically a fruit, and the largest single tomato ever grown weighed 7lbs 12oz.

Pepper (Capsicum spp.)
Native Mexico and South America, the capsicum genus has over 20 different species. The heat ingredient capsaicin is used in medicine to treat skin disorders, pain and other ailments.

Quinoa
A species of Chenopodium, a variety was eaten by Indians in the southeast.. It is a complete protein that is packed with other vitamins and minerals. The UN declared 2013 “Year of Quinoa”.
Tobacco (Nicotiana sp.)
   The native tobacco in this region is Nicotiana rustica. The tobacco grown throughout the southeastern United States as a cash crop is Nicotiana tabacum which is native to tropical regions. Tobacco was the first genetically modified plant (1986).

Cotton (Gossypium hirsutum)
   Cotton was independently domesticated in different regions throughout the world. The American variety, known as cotton, comes from what is now Mexico and has been cultivated for over 5,000 years. American upland cotton comes in numerous shades of tan, brown and green.

Amaranth (Amaranthus L.)
   Grown throughout the world for food, amaranth can be eaten as a grain or a green. Many varieties throughout the Americas are being cultivated. Due to it’s high lysine content, it pairs well with corn (which lacks lysine) in a balance diet.

Gourd (Cucurbitae)
   Grown throughout the world, gourds come in many shapes and sizes. Properly cured and dried, gourds can be used as containers, eating utensils and for making music.
The Garden Process

1. Remove grass in future garden space through tilling, hoeing and raking
2. Plant blueberry bushes in garden area
3. Haul in dirt (free from City of Garner)
4. Fertilize dirt brought in (using organic fish meal/bone meal and other fertilizers)
5. Prepare Three Sisters garden area (mounding for plants)
6. Plant Three Sisters garden, sunflowers and gourds
7. Build boxes for other planting areas and prepare area for peanuts (mounds) and beans (rows)
8. Plant seeds, slips and transplants in boxes (fertilize dirt in boxes first)
9. Plant peanuts (from seed) and beans (from seed)
10. Maintain garden through watering, focused fertilizing (organic, based on plant needs), weeding and pest control (organic)
11. Harvest throughout the year
12. Plant winter crops (not all native plants)
Removing Grass and Tilling
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Good Dirt for the Garden
Good Dirt for the Three Sisters Garden
Spreading More Dirt
Everybody Likes to Spread Dirt
Planting Boxes
Garden is Planted
Three Sisters:
Corn, Beans and Squash
Tobacco
Peanuts
Peppers
Tomatoes
Beans
Quinoa
and
Amaranth
Harvest Time.......
Zucchini
Summer Squash
Yellow Crookneck Squash
Sunflowers
Tomatoes
Gourds
North Carolina Museum of History
Planting & Assisting with their Garden
Cattail mat weaving is pretty hard to do in the summer...
Wigwam and Legislature
Spreading Dirt Can Wear You Out…
Wake County Indian Education Garden, Spring and Summer, 2012
During Fall Winter 2012-13

• During the fall and winter most of the crops planted were not focused on native varieties from the Americas because there are not as many native winter crops as spring/summer crops.

• We decided to plant varieties of plants that folks were familiar with such as collards, beets, mustard greens and other fall and winter crops.

• We also planted some green fertilizers such as clovers, legumes and grains to work the soil and put nitrogen back into the soil.
Spring 2013

• In the spring we will alter the layout of the garden a bit and plant some things in new areas for good rotation and plant a few new plants.

• New plants, such as jerusalem artichoke and prickly pear cactus will expand knowledge on native plants, and native trees such as paw paw and sassafras will allow us to harvest fruit and roots for food and drink.

• We will also expand into the area under the trees and plant a few culinary and medicinal plants and herbs for use and interpretation.
Spring/Summer 2013

• We need a tool box, so in the spring we will construct one in the far corner of the garden and a stand for the rain barrels so that we have better pressure for watering with hoses.

• These changes will allow for a comprehensive look at what native people throughout the Americas contributed to the world’s catalog of culinary and medicinal plants.

• During the coming year we will also begin showing the students how to save seeds, which will save money and help the garden be self-sufficient.
Wake County Indian Education Garden, Spring and Summer, 2013
(still working on varieties)
Contact Information

For more information about the TNAS/WCIEP Community Education Garden Project, please contact:
Gwen Locklear, Coordinator
Wake County Title VII Indian Education Program
Phone: 919-812-1473 (cell)
Email: 4locks@bellsouth.net

Jefferson Currie II
Phone: 919-971-7990 (cell)
Email: scuffletown@gmail.com or jefferson.currie@gmail.com

Kerry D. Bird, President
Triangle Native American Society
tnaspresident@aol.com