

## Native Crops and Contributions

### I. How Early Indians Obtained Their Food

- A. Hunters
- B. Fishermen
- C. Root-diggers
- D. Gatherers
- E. Agriculturalist
  - 1. Farmers
  - 2. Horticulturist

### II. American Indians in Agriculture

#### Nationally:

- A. Excellent farmers
  - 1. Women did the farming
  - 2. Men prepared fields
- B. First to cultivate about 50% of the world's plant foods
- C. Developed more than 20 important food products
- D. Cultivated and utilized many wild growths

#### Locally:

- A. Transplanted food crops
  - 1. Sourberry
  - 2. Elderberry
  - 3. Wild Onion
- B. Cultivated food crops & basket making resource material
  - 1. Sourberry
    - a. Fire used
    - b. Prodding of Soil
    - c. Mulching
  - 2. Sedge (white root)
    - a. Main runners left
    - b. Runts & excessive runners weeded
- C. Horticulture practiced on all food & plant resources
  - 1. Redbud & Chapperal
    - a. New shoot thinning
    - b. Dead or dying stalks removed
    - c. Not over gathered
    - d. Burned when no longer a producer

## II. American Indians in Agriculture cont.

Locally:

- C. Horticulture practiced on all food & plant resources
  - 2. Elderberry, Sourberry & Wild Grape
    - a. Multi-use resources
    - b. Never over gathered
    - c. Thinned of dead or dying branches

## III. Three Categories of Food Crops

- A. Those crops developed from wild growths and skillfully cultivated  
example: corn
- B. Those crops taken from the wild and unchanged in character  
example: avocado
- C. Plants used in their wild state  
example: berries, roots/bulbs & nuts

## IV. Major Crop Contributions to the World

- A. Potato (sweet potato)
  - 1. Two kinds
    - a. dry fleshed (white)
    - b. moist fleshed (yams)
  - 2. Name from the Taino Indians of Haiti - "batata"
  - 3. White tubers came from Peru
  - 4. Yams named by slaves from Senegal, Africa - "nyami"
  - 5. First cultivated in Europe around 1580 for it's blossom
    - a. 100 years later it became a food staple
    - b. 1663 Irish subsisted on them
    - c. 1719 Irish brought cultivated potatoe back to New England
- B. Corn (Maize).
  - 1. Often called the most remarkable achievement in the history of agriculture
  - 2. Most completely domesticated of all grains (Cannot sow itself and care for itself)
  - 3. Believed to be the oldest of all grains.
  - 4. Five classes of corn
    - a. Flint, dent, flour, popcorn, and sweetcorn
- C. Cotton--long-staple (length of cotton fiber)
  - 1. Developed in Mexico and South America

#### IV. Major Crop Contributions to the World Cont.

##### D. Tobacco

1. Cultivated species
2. Natural species
3. Taino Indians called it - "tabaco"
4. First taken to Europe in 1558

##### E. Rubber--used for centuries

1. South American Indians manufactured balls, waterproof bags & gum boots
2. S. Am. Indians also devised ways of obtaining sap and treating it

##### F. Tomatoes

1. Thought to be poisonous
2. Nahuatl Indians - "tomatl"
3. Developed in South America

##### G. Chocolate

1. Originally drank cold with chile pepper
2. Seeds used by ancient Aztecs as the basis for their monetary system
3. Aztecs - "chocolatl"/ Nahuatl - "cacauatl"/Spanish - "cocoa"

##### H. Tapioca

1. Made from a poisonous plant, manioc

##### I. Chicle (gum)

1. Extracted resin like they did rubber

##### J. Other crops

Squash, Pumpkins, Beans, Strawberries, Pineapples, Vanilla, Peanuts, Cashew nuts, Maple sugar & syrup, Pepper

The next time you sit down to a succulent meal, recognize the many contributions made by the Indian.

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