

Cultural Gardening: The Three Sisters

Learn about companion plants with The Three Sisters. Native American agriculture features beans, corn, and squash, which support each other as they grow.

Age Appropriateness:

9-12, 13 and up

Key Topics:

Science,

History,

Social Studies

Skills:

Reading,

Researching,

Gardening,

Experimenting

Materials:

Corn, bean, and squash seeds, gardening area at least 20 sq. ft.

Action Time:

2 hours

Resources:

Keepers of the Earth by:

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[http://
www.horizon.nmsu.edu/
kids/webquests/
wqthreesisters_k.html](http://www.horizon.nmsu.edu/kids/webquests/wqthreesisters_k.html)

[http://www.mnh.si.edu/
archives/garden/history/](http://www.mnh.si.edu/archives/garden/history/)

OBJECTIVES

- To learn and experiment with basic gardening techniques.
- To learn the culture and history that surround various methods of gardening.



Discussion

Research The Three Sisters: corn beans and squash. How does this gardening technique work? What are the benefits that corn, beans, and squash offer each other? What methods of fertilization and cultivation help this relationship work?

Contact local gardening organizations and conduct interviews. What are the best varieties of seeds to use in your area? Will your environment naturally support the companion growing technique? If not, what are some methods of gardening that can help create a supportive environment?

Develop a display or a handout about what you learned. From here you can create a Three Sisters garden in your local community.

Action

- Plant the garden using the variety of seeds and gardening methods that resulted from research. Allow the youth to guide adult volunteers on how to properly plant the seeds.
- Set up an information table so that youth can share stories and information about their hard work to prepare for the garden.

Reflection

1. Revisit the garden weekly and chart the progress of the plants. Experiment with various methods of fertilization and cultivation!
2. Research recipes that include The Three Sisters so you can enjoy your vegetables after they grow!
3. What other type of cultural garden could you create to reflect the culture of your neighborhood?