



LEARN SOMETHING NEW
EACH WEEK ON OUR
WORLD OF WONDER PAGES!



WORLD OF WONDER

Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology

THE THREE SISTERS

The Three Sisters, corn (maize), beans and squash, have been grown by Native Americans for centuries. They are known as the Three Sisters because they are grown together. The corn provides support for the bean vine, and together they help shade the squash.

Beans have significant amounts of fiber and are high in protein, complex carbohydrates, folate and iron.

Soak dry beans for a few hours before cooking with them.

Corn

Two or three days after a corn seed is planted, roots are established. Leaves emerge within a week, and a month later the tassel and buds (ears of corn) develop.

Corn is a source of starch. Corn is also rich in phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper and iron.

Beans

Beans need warm temperatures to thrive. After planting, it typically takes 55 to 60 days for the beans to mature enough to be harvested. Because they grow on a vine, bean plants need extra support, such as a bean cage, pole or cornstalk.

Squash

Because they belong to the same family, ornamental gourds, summer squash and pumpkins can **cross-pollinate**. This often results in hybrid gourds in many different colors and shapes.

The legend

According to the Iroquois legend, corn, beans and squash are inseparable sisters that were given to the people by the Great Spirit. Different stories and legends about the Three Sisters are found in many regions and tribes around North America.

What a great idea!

The Three Sisters companion planting technique is still in use today and for good reasons: It maintains high yields, promotes healthy soil, suppresses weeds, attracts pollinators, promotes genetic diversity and requires low water input — all without harmful chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Make a doll

Corn was used for more than food by Native Americans. The husks were often braided into rugs, baskets and toys.

Corn husk dolls are traditionally made without faces. Legend has it that the face was taken away because the doll was too vain.

Beans have been a part of the human diet for thousands of years.

Sprout

Seeds

Squash is a good source of potassium, manganese, calcium, magnesium, vitamin E, thiamin, niacin, vitamin B-6 and folate. High in fiber, squash can help people feel full without a lot of calories.

Female flower

Male flower

Mature squash

Bees transfer pollen from the male blossom to the female blossom.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia; <https://naitc-api.usu.edu>; www.iowacorn.org; National Corn Growers Association; <http://www.nourishinteractive.com>; www.mayoclinic.org; <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>; <http://archaeology.about.com>; <http://nationalpeanutboard.org>; <http://www.americangourdsociety.org>

© 2019 Triefeldt Studios, Inc.
Distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication

LEARN ABOUT LUNGS IN THE NEXT INSTALLMENT OF WORLD OF WONDER