

Grow the Plants the Indians Grew

Planting an Indian Garden is an interesting activity. Such a garden had been planted at the Camp Fire Girls' camp in Des Moines, Iowa, and the following is an account of the project.

"I will be very glad to tell you of the Indian Garden which we are having as one of our camp projects this summer. The seeds for our garden were purchased from the Oscar H. Will and Co., pioneer seed house, at Bismarck, N. D. We got from this company the following list of original Indians Seeds:

- "1 pkg. Indian Sunflower.
- "1 pkg. Assinboine Corn.
- "1 pkg. Omaha Pumpkin.
- "1 pkg. Gilmore Squash.
- "1 pkg. Early Mandan Squash.
- "1 pkg. Arikara Yellow Beans.
- "1 pkg. Nuetta Sweet Corn.

"The garden is to be a project of the Wo-Ha Order of Hantesa Honor Campers. The Wo-Ha girls are a group of older campers, who have fulfilled the requirements in this Hantesa honor group, and they carry on activities for the betterment and growth of camp throughout the year. They are much interested in this project.

"A week-end at camp was planned at seed-planting time and the girls had lots of fun getting the ground plowed and the seeds planted. They are to sponsor the garden, keep it before the minds of the campers during the summer, and see that proper care is taken of the growing plants. Other campers will be enlisted by them to help in the weeding, hoeing, etc. Plans are being now made for the harvesting of our crop of Indian food. Indian dishes will be cooked and comparisons made with modern grains when the time comes for harvest. The girls are intensely interested and are watching eagerly the growth of their plants."

—HARRIET DIVELY,
Camp Fire Girls.

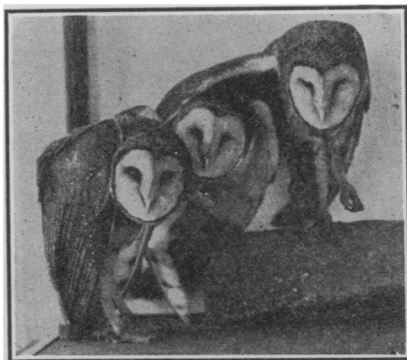
Science News-Letter, July 30, 1927

Indian Crops

When Columbus discovered America he found Indians growing corn, squashes and beans. None of these grew wild in what is now called the United States.

Corn is a native of tropical America. The Mayas cultivated it many centuries B. C. When they

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AMERICAN BARN OWLS
(Courtesy of American Museum of Natural History)

were conquered by the Aztecs its cultivation was continued, and by 1000 A. D. it had reached the Eastern States.

When Columbus landed it was the principal crop of the agricultural Indians.

Next to maize their most important crop was the common kidney bean. This is a South American plant whose culture spread through Mexico and the United States to Canada. Seeds of it have been discovered in the prehistoric graves of Arizona.

The squash is not known wild but it is thought to be a tropical American plant. The Indians have long cultivated it.

In the 17th century the common sunflower, and the tuberous sunflower (the Jerusalem artichoke) were known to be cultivated by the Indians. These are the only plants in our own gardens developed by the Indians from any of the species native in the United States.

Now they are more extensively cultivated in the old world than in the new.

A few undisturbed fields still remain showing traces of hills where the Indians raised crops of corn. These are now overgrown mounds of earth about 1½ feet high.

Sometimes the rows of cornhills were geometrically regular; sometimes they were not arranged in definite rows; and sometimes beans, pumpkins, tobacco and sunflowers were grown in with the corn. They were also grown in gardens laid out in long narrow beds with paths between them.

The Indians knew how to preserve and store many of their food supplies so that from these crops and from wild plants they obtained food

for the winter as well as the summer.

Because of the importance of corn to the Indians they were very grateful to it, and it played an important part in their religion and religious ceremonies.

By some of the tribes rites were observed when the maize was planted, at certain stages of its growth and when it was harvested.

Although the bean and the squash were not objects of religious reverence, appreciation of them is shown in the title given to them by the Iroquois Indians who called them together with corn "our supporters" and the "three sisters."

—AMY FISKE,
Girl Scouts.

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Nature Coordination

Realizing the need for a national program that would coordinate the nature activities of national groups working with young people, the American Museum of Natural History invited these volunteer organizations to form a council to be known as the Coordinating Council on Nature Activities for the purpose of teaching the growing generation, through nature activities, the value of all wild life and natural resources and their conservation.

The various organizations represented are as follows:

American Museum of Natural History, American Natural Study Society, Boy Scouts of America, Camp Directors Association, Camp Fire Girls, Inc., Girl Scouts, Inc., Pioneer Youth of America, Playground and Recreation Association, Woodcraft League of America.

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Clay houses are being built in Germany.

About 13,000 farms were sold in the State of Ohio last year.

The crocodile and tortoise are among the longest lived animals.

The Bureau of Standards has measured engraving so small that over 43 million words could have been within a one-inch area.

Certain tribes in Central Africa believe that if they dream of catching fish they will find a big bag of money.