

Start a Native Plant Garden

Beginning thousands of years ago, members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, consisting of five tribal entities in what is now Maine, lived here. Tribal members remain in this area today. The Wabanaki people lived according to the changing seasons, traveling distances to live in small villages or hunt, plant and fish along the coast.

During spring, summer and fall, the Wabanaki planted gardens to grow food. One traditional planting method is called **Three Sisters**, which includes:

- 1) **Corn**
- 2) **Beans**
- 3) **Squash**

These seeds can be found at local stores, farmers markets, and local farms.

Typically, corn is planted in the center of a mound of soil; then, beans planted between the corn; and finally, squash planted around the periphery. You can start these seeds indoors, and then plan to plant your seedlings outdoors after Memorial Day.

The corn provides a natural pole for the climbing beans, which fix nitrogen on their roots, improving the quality of the soil. The squash vines provide shade to keep the soil moist and inhibit weeds. This planting method also inhibits pests from eating the growing vegetables.

We thank the Wabanaki for passing down this planting method that still works today.



Two other native plants in the region now known as Maine are **sunflowers** and **pumpkins**, which have existed in New England for over 5,000 years. These plants can be grown through the summer, resulting in a fall harvest.

Visit the Museum's Victory Garden this summer to see the Three Sisters in action! Follow the Victory Garden Blog on www.brickstoremuseum.org to discover more gardening tips and history!