

Native Plants

For thousands of years, **Native Americans in East Tennessee** used **plants** for many purposes: for their food and drinks, but also to make medicines, baskets, mats, clothes, nets, dyes, torches, and so much more!

Their descendants, the **Cherokees** and **Muscogee Creek** tribes, still use many of these plants today.



This artwork shows how Native Americans might have planted some crops together. This method is called Three Sisters gardening.

To the left and right are pictures of pumpkins and corn from this kind of garden at the University of Tennessee.

Look on the back for fun activities identifying plants that you live with and use!



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Activity Time!

Your family uses plants too!

See how many of the same plants you can find in your neighborhood.



Acorns (oaks)

Native Americans used the acorns for food (but don't eat them raw!) and tree bark for medicines and basketry. Children played with acorns too!

Black walnuts

The nuts were used for food, and the husks of the nuts to make a brown dye. They also used the bark and roots to make a brown dye, and to make medicines.



Sunflowers

They ate the seeds and used the flowers for medicines. The oldest sunflower seed was found in Tennessee - it's 4000 years old! Do you like to eat sunflower seeds too?



Pumpkins

Native Americans ate the flesh and seeds, and dried them to eat later in the year. They also made medicines from them. Do you like to eat pumpkin bread?

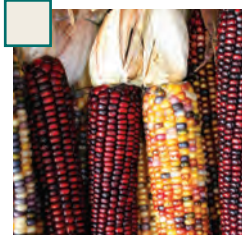


Persimmons

The fruits were eaten and also dried to eat later in the year, like we eat raisins. They also used the tree bark for medicines.

Corn

Corn kernels were eaten fresh (like corn on the cob), dried (like corn meal and hominy), and even as popcorn! Corn was also important in ceremonies. They also used dried corn shucks to make dolls.



Pokeweed

People ate the spring leaves (in the fall, the leaves will make you sick!). In the fall, they used the purple berries to make a dye, and different parts of the plants to make medicines.



Bottle gourds

These were used to make dippers, bowls, bottles, drums, and rattles. They also used the leaves and seeds to make medicines.

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