

Harvest of the Month



CORN

Local Highlight

September is peak harvest time for many crops in Humboldt County, including sweet corn!

Check out our video about local corn and how it is grown at the Corn Crib in Pepperwood:
hcoe.org/2024/01/corn/

Language Links

English: corn, maize

Scientific Name (Latin):
Zea mays

Spanish: el maíz

Hmong: pob kws

Joke Corner

What do you call a single kernel on a corn cob?

A unicorn.

Why shouldn't you tell a secret on a farm?

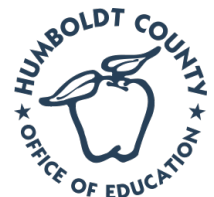
Because the corn have ears!

What do you call two cornstalks who are best friends?

Earbuds.



HUMBOLDT COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Nutrition Programs & Services

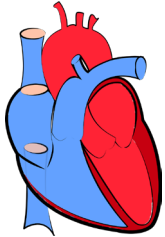


CORN

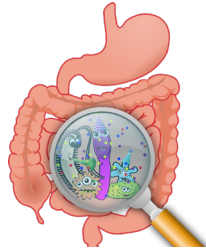


Nutrition Power

Corn is a good source of potassium and fiber.



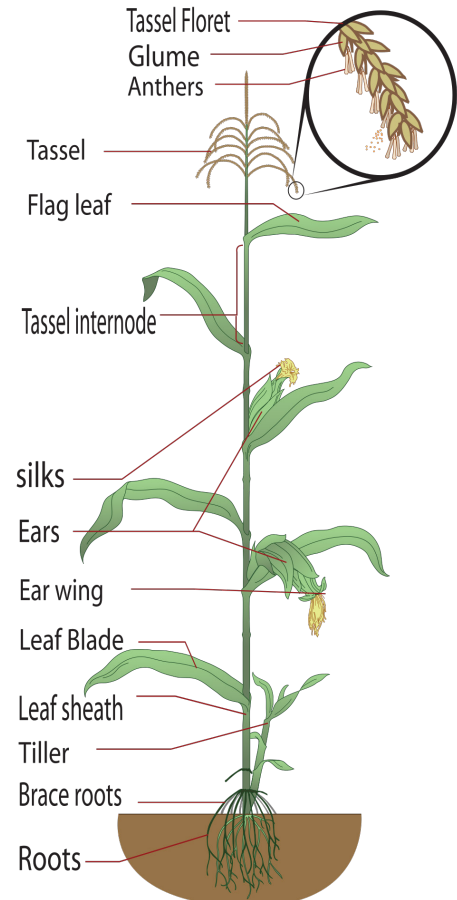
Potassium
helps your
heart to pump!



Fiber helps
your gut health
and digestion!

Did You Know?

- ❑ Plant part we eat: **FRUIT** - every kernel is a single-seeded fruit!
- ❑ Corn is a grass! Native peoples developed corn from a wild grass called teosinte (tay-oh-seen-tay) in what is now known as southern Mexico, around 7-9,000 years ago.
- ❑ We call corn a cereal grass. Cereal grasses are grown for their edible fruits, called grain. Wheat, rice, and oats are some other cereal grasses.
- ❑ Corn is monoecious, meaning it has separate male and female flowers on the same plant. The male flower forms at the top of the plant and is called the tassel. It makes millions of tiny pollen grains. Female flowers (ears) form further down the stalk and have hundreds of strands of hairs that are called silks.
- ❑ Every single silk is connected to an ovule in the flower. When a strand of silk catches a grain of pollen, the pollen travels down to the connected ovule and makes a single kernel of corn. There is one silk for every single kernel on a cob!
- ❑ Corn grows on stalks that usually reach 7-10 feet high. Each stalk produces 1-3 ears of corn. An ear of corn always has an even number of rows of kernels!



CORN



Three Sisters

Corn is sacred to numerous native cultures in North America including the Navajo, Cherokee, and Iroquois. The Iroquois and Cherokee call corn, squash, and beans the **Three Sisters** because they support and nurture each other like family when planted together.

Seeds from all three crops are planted in a mound of soil. Sister Corn grows tall and gives Sister Bean a structure to climb, Sister Bean provides nitrogen to the soil that helps her sisters thrive, and Sister Squash grows large leaves that shade the soil, conserving water and preventing weeds.

This kind of **inter-cropping** or **poly-culture** is also found in Mexico and Central America where a traditional Mayan farming system known as **milpa** is used. In Mayan milpa agriculture, corn, beans, and squash are grown together with other crops such as herbs, chilies, avocados, and other crops.



Green Corn Ceremony

Many native cultures developed traditions, ceremonies, and stories to honor all the ways corn helped their people. A lot of the traditions continue today, including the Green Corn Ceremonies of eastern U.S. tribes that celebrate the first corn harvest each summer, such as the Yuchi, Iroquois, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and others. The celebration lasts four to eight days and includes feasting on the remains of last year's crop, fasting, dancing, and ceremonial fires.

Side Note About Corn Diversity

There are many types of corn. Sweet corn, like the corn on the cob we enjoy in the summer, has the most sugar and is eaten when tender, before the corn is mature. Flint, dent, flour, and popcorn types have more starch and are used after they have fully matured and dried. Dent and some flour types are used to make tortillas, and polenta is made from flint types.



CORN



Activity Ideas

1. Shuck an ear of corn and observe the following:
 - Can you see some of the silks? Where do they attach?
 - Are there any missing kernels? That is where some silks didn't catch any pollen!
 - Count the rows of kernels. Is it an even number?
2. Have students role play the three sisters. Refer to the "Garden Puzzle" activity from *The Growing Classroom* by Life Lab for a lesson plan (the activity is found in the Interdependence and Garden Ecology section).
3. Look at a Companion Planting Guide and choose some plants to inter-crop in your garden.
4. Plan a harvest ceremony for your garden!
5. Make corn husk dolls (instructions from Life Lab included).

Tasting

CORN SALAD

You can eat corn raw! A simple corn salad is a great way to do so.

Ingredients:

- Fresh corn (1 ear per 5 students)
- Juice of a lime
- Salt
- Optional: chopped herbs like cilantro or basil



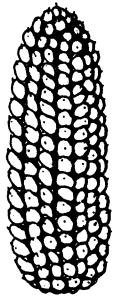
Instructions:

1. Shuck the corn and break each corn cob in half.
2. Place a flat end of a cob on a cutting board and carefully slice off the corn. Be sure to cut close to the core to get as much of the whole kernels as possible. Repeat for all cobs. Add the corn kernels to a medium bowl.
3. Add lime juice (around half a lime per 5 ears of corn) and herbs (if using).
4. Add salt to taste and mix together.

Life Lab Beat

Types of Corn Grown in the U.S.

There are six different types of corn grown in the United States—popcorn, flint, dent, sweet, flour, and pod—with many different varieties of each type. Different types of corn are used for different purposes.



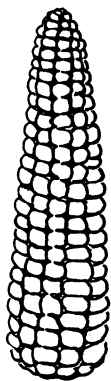
Popcorn—A type of flint corn, popcorn is used for pinole (toasted and ground up) and as popped corn.



Flint corn—Used in cornmeal and as animal feed, flint corn kernels are hard and flinty. When dry, flint corn generally stores better and has greater resistance to insect damage.



Dent—Mature kernels are dented as a result of the flour (soft) heart of the kernel and the flint sides. Dent corn is used for *elote* (roasted corn), in cornmeal, tamales, tortillas, corn beer, and animal feed.



Sweet corn—This appears on our tables as corn-on-the-cob and is used for pinole. Kernel colors develop when the corn is past the milk stage (when it is green corn).



Flour corn—This soft, grinding corn is used for cornmeal, *elote* (roasting corn or fresh tamale corn) and hominy (*masa* or *nixtamal*).



Pod corn—Each kernel of this corn is enclosed in a husk. It is also known as "grandfather" corn.

Corn Husk Doll Instructions



MATERIALS:

*REQUIRED

DRIED
CORN
HUSKS

SOAKING BOWL
WITH WATER (PRE-SOAK
DRIED CORN HUSKS)

SCISSORS

THIN STRIPS OF DRIED
CORN HUSKS (PRE-MADE FOR TYING)

*OPTIONAL

SMALL
(≈ 1.5" DIA.)
STYRAFOAM BALL (FOR
HEAD)

THIN
STRING

OR
THREAD
(FOR
TYING)

FELT PEN (FOR FACE)

FABRIC
SCRAPS

TARN

RIBBONS

DRIED
FLOWERS
& TWIGS

• NOTE: CORN HUSK DOLLS CAN BE MADE ENTIRELY FROM HUSK MATERIALS.

STEPS:

1. MAKE HEAD
& ARMS.

HEAD:

ROLLED HUSK
WITH CORN
SILK 'HAIR'

OR BALL

ARMS: 2 HUSKS, 6-8" LONG,
ROLLED

& TIED AT ENDS

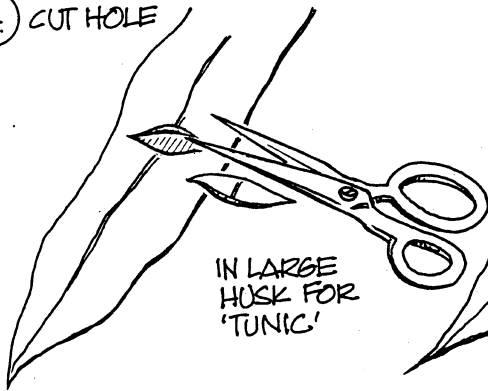
2. WRAP
LONG HUSK
OVER HEAD
& TIE BELOW
FOR 'NECK'.

ADD FACE,
IF DESIRED,
WITH FELT PEN.

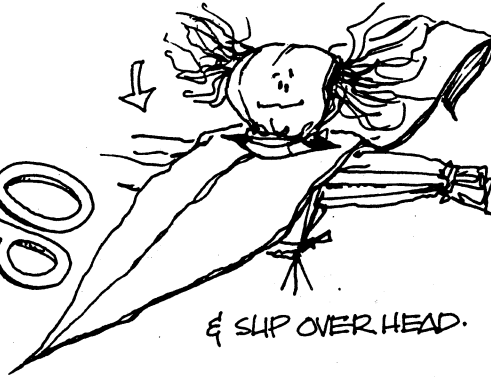
3. SLIP 'ARMS' UP
UNDER 'NECK'

& TIE BELOW.

4. CUT HOLE



IN LARGE
HUSK FOR
'TUNIC'



& SLIP OVER HEAD.



TIE AT
'WAIST.'



5. ADD 'SKIRT'
HUSKS ALL AROUND
WAIST
& TIE FROM BELOW.
(ABOVE 'WAIST' TIE)

6. FOLD HUSK
'SKIRT' DOWN



• NOTE:

FOR 'PANTS'



DIVIDE 'SKIRT' IN HALF



& TIE AT ENDS FOR 'LEGS.'

& ADD
'SASH'
TO FINISH.

NOW,

DECORATE YOUR DOLL
& ENJOY!

