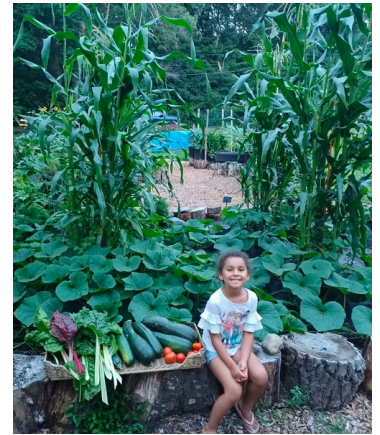

EDUCATION NEWS

Kunoopeam (Welcome) Readers!

Aukeeteaúmitch nanepaûshat (planting time moon) is one of the busiest times of the season. Now is that time. Historically, Indigenous villages were busy preparing the grounds to plant the mounds of ewáchimneash (corn), manusqussêdash (beans), and askútasquash (squash) known as the three sisters. Growing in a symbiotic relationship these three crops provided all the nutrients a body would need. Sunchokes, gourds, tobacco, sunflowers and other plants were also grown. Large tracts of land were burned to keep brush low and fields cleared for planting and cultivating the vast quantities of food required to feed the people. The misconceptions and lack of understanding of the early colonists often documented that Indigenous peoples did not know how to use the land, quite the contrary. Land was intentionally cultivated with patterns for best crop yield and a practice of allowing the land to “rest” to avoid overuse and promote regeneration. These were concept foreign to the agricultural practices of the settling Europeans. As early as 1605 the writings of early observers like Samuel de Champlain, Roger Williams, Edward Winslow, and Captain John Smith, served as documentation along with archaeological discoveries to provide evidence of these early practices.



Catori Northup August 2, 2022
(Photo courtesy of PCG)



Indian Corn-Hills in Massachusetts Author(s): Edmund B. Delabarre and Harris H. Wilder Source: American Anthropologist , Jul. - Sep., 1920, New Series, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1920), pp. 203-225

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FROM TOMAQUAG'S EDUCATION DEPARTMENT...



Produce at Ashawaug Farm in Ashaway, RI

Indigenous led farms are reclaiming both native and historically introduced vegetable varieties. One local Indigenous farm doing this work today is Ashawaug Farm located in Ashaway, RI, where Dawn and Cassius Spears Sr. carry on these traditions in a modern way. They have traveled extensively sharing their Indigenous knowledge in support of food sovereignty and sustainable farming. They are educators and culture bearers whose gifts extend beyond just planting - it's art. Their many beautiful displays of the foods they grow and harvest are a testament to their creativity. At this farm you will find native vegetables, a wide variety of tomato species, and come June, there will be sweet strawberries as well. They sell their produce out of a quaint little structure adorned with farming items from the past.

At Tomaquag Museum in Exeter, RI, Indigenous planters Ridge Spears and Mikala Jackson are busily reestablishing native species like the beach plum tree, strawberries, sunchoke, alum root, wild garlic and more! Still another renewal effort is Meechooók Farm owned and operated by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation in Connecticut under the direction of Jeremy Whipple. While using traditional mounds to grow the three sisters, they are incorporating the use of hydroponics, a modern methodology, to grow lettuce and tomatoes as well as. Additionally, they plan to reintroduce native medicinal plants as blood root and white cedar. Black ash will be grown to supply resources for the traditional basket makers. They work to become self-sufficient and provide healthy food for the next 7 generations. In Mystic Seaport Museum's efforts to be more inclusive of the Indigenous peoples whose homelands they are on, originally Pequot territory, they solicited the help of Gary "Jay" Carter, of Mashantucket Pequot, Narragansett, and Niantic heritage, to establish a three sisters garden on the property. Gary is prepping the mounds and preparing them for fertilization using traditional sources as herring and rock weed. He will begin planting in mid May with the beginning of the planting moon.



Ridge Spears & Mikaela Jackson working in Tomaquag's planting beds



Elder Keith Brown
September 21, 2021 (Photo
courtesy of PCG)

Featured this month is Pettaquamscutt Community Gardens (PCG) located in South Kingstown RI. I recently spoke with Wayne Everett and Sonia Thomas, both members of the Narragansett Tribal Nation, in an interview in which they shared the farm's beginnings. The farm formed about five years ago through the spirit of Wayne's grandmother, the late Tribal Elder Mildred (Johnson) Everett along with the guidance of the late Tribal Elder Keith Brown and with the support of a host of Narragansett Tribal men and women. PCG is an Indigenous led community based garden focused on restoring the natural law and balance of Mother Earth through agriculture. Utilizing traditional methods and heirloom seeds, the farm seeks to live in harmony with the Creator's natural elements. Applying ancestral knowledge, they strive to promote food sovereignty as well as health and wellness through educational programs. The farm's purpose is to cultivate and regenerate the lands to create socio-economic sustainability for the Indigenous community, marginalized communities, and those most impacted by need. PCG donates its proceeds to the Narragansett Indian Tribe's elder meal site, Sly Fox Den Too and Willie's Place (two local Indigenous owned restaurants), the New Jonnycake Center for Hope, House of Hope CDS, and local churches.

Pettaquamscutt means "round rock or place of round rock" and is the traditional name of the area now known as South Kingstown, North Kingstown, Narragansett and Exeter. Wayne, who is also a 2022 graduate of the URI Master Gardener Core Training Program, is the great-grandson of the late Lucy Hopkins and Irving Johnson of Charlestown, RI and the late Bertha Reels and Harry Sampson of South Kingstown, RI. These elders all farmed in order to provide for their family in the early 1900s. Wayne's family background demonstrates the continuation of the Narragansett people's long history of planting and farming as a primary means of sustenance. At PCG you will find a three sisters garden growing white capped 8 row flint corn (a Narragansett flint variety), Canadian crookneck winter squash (which originated with the Haudenosaunee), pumpkin, and pole beans which derive from the Maliseet-Passamaquoddy Nation and Montauk-Shinnecock Nation.



Wayne Everett, Quenikom Pau Muckquashim (Standing Wolf)



Sonia Ascaawawa (Wildflower)
Thomas

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There is also a pollinator garden and a variety of other native plants. Wayne and Sonia explained the tradition of companion planting in which each vegetable supports the other while also replenishing mother earth and restoring nutrients into her. They shared the importance of staggering the picking stages in order to have plenty to be eaten while letting others grow longer for the following year's planting. From the corn that is grown, just one cob may produce 400-800 kernels which will be preserved. I was inspired by the words of Sonia who said "the garden is so much more than planting and growing. It's healing in the soil, it's life." She explained that the garden is an entire eco-system supporting itself. Where and what to plant to either invite pollinators or expel destroyers.

Pole Bean heirloom seeds May 29, 2022 (Photo courtesy of PCG)

Wayne and Sonia shared that they never begin planting season without first honoring Creator with ceremony which includes singing and dancing. The importance of the sounds of the drum, rattles and voices that provides a sort of "spiritual reciprocity" both feeding good energy into the plant life while being fed from the good energy of participating in the ceremony. All are welcome to join the Pettaquamscutt community gardeners as they break ground on May 17th, a date chosen by Wayne to honor his late grandmother Mildred (Johnson) Everett. Join the community in the sharing of a welcome song sung by Sonia that was handed down to her from the late Tribal Elder Ella Sekatau.



Cultivated garden Beds May 15, 2022 (Photo courtesy of PCG)

~ Chrystal Mars Baker for May 2023

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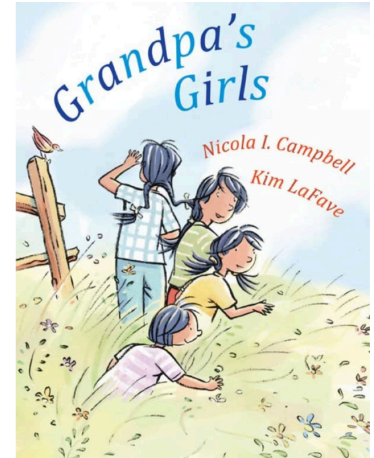
FOR THE CHILDREN:

In this book you will read about a young girl and her cousins who visit their grandpa's farm and enjoy exploring all there is to see. It's a modern farm with history sprinkled here and there and loads of fun to explore!

Celebrate Planting Moon by planting your own seeds!

You will need a small paper cup/pot, some potting soil (like miracle gro), and whatever seeds you want to grow (corn? bean? squash? tomato? cucumber? the options are endless). Your job is to care for your plant, give it water, sunlight and feed it as it grows. Finally you can plant it into a larger garden space and watch it grow!

Some terms for you to learn: Mother Earth (the soil beneath your feet which provides, nurtures, and helps to grow); Reciprocity = when you care for and give to, you receive from! So care for your plant and it will produce a food for you to eat.

**RESOURCES:**

At Tomaquag we are continuously doing the work of educating new generations of children as well as the general public about the lives, traditions and life changes of the Indigenous peoples of Rhode Island and neighboring communities. Follow us on our website at tomaquagmuseum.org, [Youtube](#) and [Facebook](#). Check out these resources!

To purchase your own copy visit this [link](#).

To hear the book read aloud, click on this [video link](#).

For a review of this book, visit this [link](#).

For more about planting:

Join Tomaquag Museum at Ashawaug Farm on May 20 at 2:00 (pre-registration required; space is limited to 25) as Dawn and Cassius Spears Sr. take us on a tour of their farm and share traditional and modern planting knowledge.

Click here to [Contact](#) the education department with any questions.