

PLANT FRIENDS: SEED CARDS

HEIRLOOM CORN

Cherokee Gourdseed Corn
(*Zea mays*)



QUICK GROWING GUIDE

- Height: Avg 12–18"
- Water: ½ to 1" per week
- Sunlight: Min 6 hours full sun
- Temp range: Min 50°F
- Soil: Well drained and fertile
- Nutrient requirement: nitrogen and phosphorous
- Hardiness Zones: 3–11
- Flowers: Male flowers on tassel at end of stalk, wind pollinated

ABOUT THIS PLANT

An heirloom corn with roots in Mexico and a history in Native American gardens since at least 1700. Warm season crop that grows best in blocks for good pollination and ear development. Drought tolerant with strong stalks that resist lodging and good resistance to common pests. Matures in 120+ days. Harvest when ears are plump, silks are dry, and kernels are fully developed. Use fresh ears for best quality.

UNIQUE NEEDS

- Heavy nitrogen requirements.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Corn is high in fiber, potassium, folic acid, and vitamin A. One ear contains 80 calories and 20 grams of carbohydrates.



ROLE IN THE THREE SISTERS

Tall stalks provide a trellis for climbing vines of other plants.

HEIRLOOM BEANS

Cherokee Cornfield Pole Snap Bean
(*Phaseolus vulgaris*)



QUICK GROWING GUIDE

- Height: Avg 10–15' (when trellised)
- Water: 1" per week
- Sunlight: Min 6–8 hours full sun (shade tolerant)
- Soil temp range: 60°F to 95°F
- Soil: Well drained. Will grow well in soil too poor for most other vegetables
- Nutrient requirement: nitrogen and phosphorous
- Hardiness Zones: 2–11
- Flowers: Rose-pink flowers, insect pollinated

ABOUT THIS PLANT

Brought by Cherokee peoples on their journey west, this drought tolerant pole bean produces excellent yields, especially when grown on trellises. Requires 60–70 days from seedling to first harvest. Delicious as green snap beans when fresh, cooked, or frozen, and when dried for shell beans. Harvest when pods are plump and full but before seeds develop. For dry beans delay harvest until pods are yellow and dry. Use fresh beans immediately for best quality.

UNIQUE NEEDS

- Pole beans are climbing types that flower over long time periods. Trellises increase yields and make harvest easier.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Fresh bean pods are high in fiber, low in calories, and a good source of vitamin C. Dry bean seeds are excellent sources of protein, phosphorus, iron, vitamin B1, fiber, and have very low levels of cholesterol.



ROLE IN THE THREE SISTERS

Beans form a beneficial relationship with soil bacteria that capture nitrogen from the air, making nitrogen available to other plants.

HEIRLOOM SQUASH

Seminole Pumpkin Squash
(*Cucurbita moschata*)



QUICK GROWING GUIDE

- Height: Avg 0.75 to 1.5'
- Water: 1" per week
- Sunlight: Min 6 hours full sun. During heat of summer benefits from some shade
- Soil temp range: 70°F
- Soil: Rich, fertile soil
- Nutrient requirement: nitrogen and phosphorous
- Hardiness Zones: 2–11
- Flowers: Yellow flowers, insect pollinated

ABOUT THIS PLANT

Traditional winter squash grown by the Calusa, Creek, and Miccosukee peoples in Florida. Sweet, firm, deep orange flesh. Good as a summer squash when picked young and partially green. Fruits can be fried, added to pasta, used in soup and many other ways. Fruits can take up to 125 days to ripen.

UNIQUE NEEDS

- Needs ample water.
- Needs room to grow.
- Consistent moisture for best yield.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Winter squash provides complex carbohydrates and fiber. It is rich in potassium, niacin, iron, and beta carotene (Vitamin A). The flowers, young leaves, shoots, and seeds are all edible.



ROLE IN THE THREE SISTERS

Spreads along the ground to help retain moisture, suppress weeds, and shade the soil.

BEE BALM

Oswego Tea
(*Monarda didyma*)



QUICK GROWING GUIDE

- Height: Avg 2–4'
- Water: 1" per week
- Sunlight: Min 6 hours full sun or partial sun
- Temp range: Min –20°F
- Soil: Medium to wet, well-drained
- Hardiness Zones: 4–9
- Flowers: July–August in dense whorls, insect pollinated

ABOUT THIS PLANT

Native perennial in the mint family with bright, scarlet-red flowers. Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

UNIQUE NEEDS

- Good air circulation to prevent mildew.
- May spread—space plants properly.

FOOD & USES

Leaves can be brewed as a pleasant herbal tea. Also used in herbal remedies and potpourri.



ROLE IN THE GARDEN

Excellent for attracting bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.