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Sculptor

“The Three Sisters”

Corn, beans and squash were among the first important crops domesticated by ancient North American societies. According to legend, they are three inseparable sister spirits, precious gifts from the Great Spirit, and called the De-o-ha-ko or ‘Our Sustainers’. The planting season is marked by ceremonies to honor them, and by retelling the stories and rituals, knowledge of growing, using and preserving the Three Sisters was passed down through generations.

The Three Sisters work together: Corn provides a pole for the bean vine which in turn stabilize the corn plants; beans also provide nitrogen, improving the soils fertility; Squash vines become a living mulch and discourage predators. They also complement each other nutritionally. Corn provides carbohydrates, dried beans are rich in protein and squash yields both vitamins from the fruit and healthful oil from the seeds.