



What is Seed Saving and Why is it Important?

Organization:

Title: What is Seed Saving and Why is it Important?

Summary: Through discussion students learn about how seed saving, as a form of Indigenous resurgence, helps local community members both foster food sovereignty and adapt to climate change.

Inquiry Question: Inquiry Question 5: What are some ways Indigenous communities are engaging in reciprocal relationships with each other and the natural world in order to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change?

Duration: 1 Class Period

Learning Environment: Classroom, outdoor

Season: All

Materials:

- Introducing Corn.pdf
- Lesson focused on the Haudenosaunee grinding stone from the Tools Bundle
- Video depicting Haudenosaunee Elder Jan Longboat discuss the importance of revitalizing traditional Haudenosaunee food making practices: <https://rb.gy/i3kjc>
- What is Seed Saving and Why is it Important.pdf
- Access to website: Kenhsteke Seed Sanctuary and Learning Centre- Tyendinaga <https://kenhstekeseedsanctuary.com/our-roots/>
- Kenhté:ke Seed Sanctuary.pdf
- Interview with Terrylynn Brant that discusses of the work of Mohawk seed savers at 6 Nations: <https://rb.gy/pibiy>

Curriculum Links:

Grade 9 Destreamed: A2.3, A2.4, A2.5, B1.1, B1.3, B2.7

Grade 10 Academic: A1.10, D1.2, D2.9

Grade 10 Applied: A1.10, D1.2, D2.4, D2.7

Meta Data:

Content Type: Activity

Bundle: Food

Theme: Global Climate Change

Subject Area: Biology, Environmental Education, Geography, Health, History, Outdoor Education, Science, Social Studies

Curriculum Focus: 9, 10

- In the same way that Manoomin is central to the lifeways and land-based practices of the Anishinaabe corn (Ó:nenhste in Kanyenkéha) is centrally important to the Haudenosaunee.



- Teacher introduces the local Indigenous relationship to corn using the handout **Introducing Corn.pdf**.
- As an extension students can watch the following video depicting Haudenosaunee Elder, Jan Longboat, discuss the importance of revitalizing traditional Haudenosaunee food making practices: <https://rb.gy/i3kjc>
- Following the video, teacher leads a discussion with class regarding why it is important for Indigenous communities to reengage in traditional food growing and preparation practices.

Seed Saving:

- Teacher begins by asking students: How did the seeds in your garden get there? Where did they come from and how did they make their way to our garden?
- Teacher reviews with students the different ways that seeds travel (ie: they float in the wind; float in water; animals or people transport them; animals eat them and then they are in their droppings; some plants explode and send seeds into the air; heavy seeds fall to the ground).
- Another way that seeds end up in our gardens is through human seed saving. Humans have been saving seeds for hundreds of years. Seed saving gives us plants for next year and helps us keep our local plants growing.
- Teacher asks students:
 - What is seed saving?
 - With the proliferation of large agribusiness focused on growing crops, why would people bother engaging in seed saving?
 - Why is seed saving important to Indigenous communities? What is seed sovereignty?
 - Why is seed sovereignty important in the face of climate change?
- Students read and discuss **What is Seed Saving and Why is it Important.pdf**. which answers the questions above.
- Students learn about seed saving that is occurring locally by reading the article in **Kenhté:ke Seed Sanctuary.pdf**.
- To solidify their learning students can check out the Kenhté:ke Seed Sanctuary and Learning Centre in Tyendinaga website: <https://rb.gy/gqcbg>
- Students can also listen to the following interview with Terrylynn Brant that discusses of the work of Mohawk seed savers at 6 Nations: <https://rb.gy/pibiy>
- Teacher has students answer the following questions based on the resources they have reviewed:
 - Why do Indigenous peoples locally engage in seed saving?
 - How can seed saving connect people to the land?



- How can seed saving help to mitigate some of the negative impacts caused by climate change?
- How does the practice of seed saving mirror the Indigenous belief that humans are a part of and not separate from nature and therefore have obligations to care for and live in reciprocity with the land?

The learning represented in these activities reflects Big Idea B. in the Indigenous Knowledge Learning Bundle: “Indigenous Knowledge is Place-Based”. To help your students learn more about this Big Idea check out the Learning Activities titled: *Land-Based Meditation*, *Land Acknowledgement Workshop*, *Ceremony Ensures Right Relations with the Land*, *The Clan System*, and *The 13 Moons* found in the *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being with the Natural World* Learning Bundle (Grades 7-10). The learning represented in these activities also reflects Big Idea C. in the Indigenous Knowledge Learning Bundle: “Reciprocity, Interdependence, and Holism are at the Heart of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being”. To help your students learn more about these ideas, foundational to Indigenous knowledge systems, check out the Learning Activities titled: *Holism*, *The Honorable Harvest*, and *Our Responsibilities* found in the *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being with the Natural World* Learning Bundle (Grades 7-10).