

THREE SISTERS PLANTING ILLUSTRATION

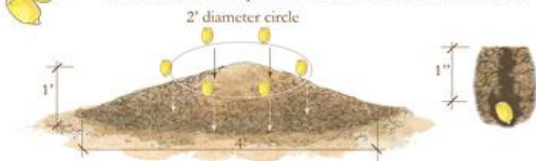
THREE SISTERS COMPANION PLANTING

By the time European settlers arrived in America in the early 1600s, the Iroquois had been growing the "three sisters" for over three centuries. The vegetable trio sustained the Native Americans both physically and spiritually. In legend, the plants were a gift from the gods, always to be grown, eaten and celebrated together. The three sisters provide both sustainable soil fertility as well as a healthy diet from a single planting.

1 In spring, prepare the soil by adding fish scraps or wood ash to increase fertility.



2 Make a mound of soil a foot high and four feet wide. When the danger of frost has passed, sow six kernels of corn an inch deep and about ten inches apart in a circle of about 2 feet in diameter.



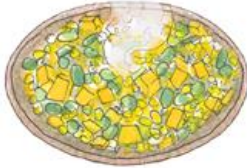
3 When the corn is about 5 inches tall, plant four bean seeds, evenly spaced, around each stalk.



4 About a week later, plant six squash seeds, evenly spaced, around the perimeter of the mound.



5 After harvest, make three sisters succotash.



CORN

provides structure for the beans.

BEANS

pull nitrogen from the air and bring it to the soil and vines wind and twist towards the sunlight, they bind the three together and provide further structure.

SQUASH

The large leaves of the sprawling squash provide shade keeping the soil cool, moist and weed-free. create living mulch that shades moist and preventing weeds. The prickly squash leaves also keep away raccoons, which don't like to step on them.

TOGETHER

The three sisters provide both sustainable soil fertility as well as a healthy diet.

