

Adventures with Squash



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The “Squash in Sustainable Food Production” project

- Funded by a SARE Youth Educator Grant
- Partners include Sue Isbell, NDSU Sioux County Extension, Colette Wolf and Robert Fox, UTTC Land Grant Program, Jennifer Nodland-Lenning, MHA Nation, and Frank Kutka, Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society
- Two years of demonstration, research and outreach to breed squash and learn about food with Indigenous youth

Goals of the “Squash in Sustainable Food Production” project

- Empowered youth who have skills and knowledge about food, gardening, marketing, and plant breeding
- Healthier communities with more options for high quality food and income
- New squash varieties with delicious fruits off of bush type plants for small gardens
- Model of youth plant breeding work for other groups across the country

How did we get started?

Squash, gardening, seed saving, and marketing are old traditions of many Indigenous peoples

Sahnish grandmother preparing squash



Sahnish elder in the garden

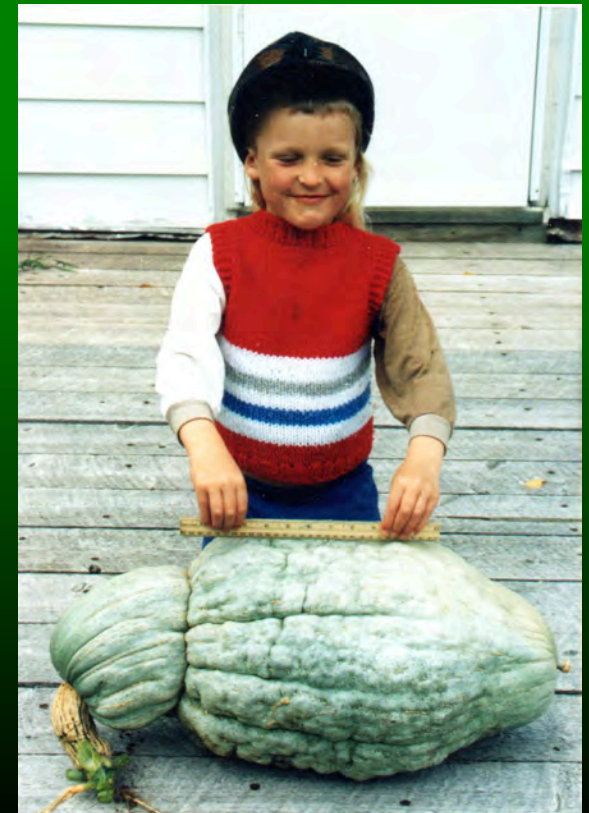




Youth education once included the basics of agriculture, plant breeding, nutrition, and marketing... Why not now?

4-H CORN CLUB MANUAL





Some of us had good experiences with young folks in the garden and were ready to share



Squash have big flowers and seeds, and tasty fruit, so they are easy for anyone to work with. You can even eat the flowers

Frank made crosses the year before so we could have a quick start.



Elders from Ft. Berthold and Standing Rock on the first day telling stories and also praying before the seeds are planted in the ground.



The squash plants that we
planted last summer.



Teaching the youth and their parents about the different types of squash and about marketing their produce (any kind) if they want to sell it.



The youth picking the seeds out of the squash to clean and to save for the next year.



Saving the squash seeds for next year!



Squash seeds ready for next year!



The taste test, surprising thing was that the sweetest squash didn't win the best tasting one.



Squash that was cut up for the demonstration and drying, the cookies are squash cookies the kids loved them.



The kids cleaning up after the seed saving training.



Squash from our first year growing at the college



Elders from White Shield, ND visiting Sioux county extension gardens in Ft. Yates, ND



The youth in the gardens self pollinating the squash plants



Just a picture of the kids having a really fun time in the garden looking for squash flowers



Harvesting the squash from last years gardens



Planting the seeds that they saved last year.



This years
squash
plants, they
are breed to
be the bush
type not
vine



Outreach to Others

- Squash for elders, kitchens, and for sale
- Conference presentations
- New squash varieties
- Youth presentations to NDSU Extension and NPSAS Farm Breeding Club next fall
- YouTube videos are in the works
- Sustainable squash growing, eating, marketing, seed saving, and plant breeding manual for Junior Master Gardeners

Thank You!

