

# Lenape Garden Plants

## Corn (Xaskwim)

The principal variety is Sehsapsink, a blue flint corn grown by the Lenape in the ancestral homeland for centuries. Another ancestral variety available is called Puhwem, a white flower corn.

## Beans (Malaxkwsita)

Three varieties have origins going back 250 years in the Delaware River Valley of PA: Blue Shakamaxon, Purple Kingessing, and Hannah Freeman.

## Squash (Eskunthak)

The common word for squash and pumpkins. There are many varieties harvested for fall & winter foods.

## Tobacco (Kwshatay)

One of the original plant medicines used in cultural exchange and ceremony.

## Sunflowers (Oxeataeyok)

There are many varieties that produce edible seeds and attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

## Gourds (Xkanakhako)

There are many varieties that can be made into vessels, dippers, rattles, and even birdhouses.

# Plants for the Meadow

## Milkweed (Mahkhalahpis)

A non-edible variety that attracts pollinators.

## Goldenrod (Wisaotaek)

A medicine plant that acts as an herbal remedy for sinus allergies and to ease discomfort from stomach ailments. It can also be used as a culinary herb.

## Sumac (Kelekenikanakw)

A medicine plant for a variety of skin ailments. It can also be a refreshing tonic, or mixed with tobacco for a smoking blend, or used as a dye of various colors.

## Sassafras (Winakw)

A springtime cleansing tonic. The root is used as a blood thinner to reduce blood pressure. Powdering the leaves helps to thicken sauces, soups, and stews.

## Wild grape (Wisahkim)

Bitter when fresh because of high tartaric acid. Juice the grapes and let sit for a few days. The potassium will react with the acid and produce cream of tartar. Strained juice is rich in Vitamin C and E, iron and niacin. A favorite Lenape dish is grape dumplings.

## Cattail (Ahpawiak)

Fresh pollen applied to wounds stops bleeding. Roots can be smashed into a poultice to treat blisters, boils, and other infections. Roots can be boiled or steamed and sliced for salads. Flower heads can be used as tinder for fires or soaked in oil or fat to use as torches.

# For Further Learning

The information presented in this brochure is provided for educational purposes by **Curtis Zunigha**, Project Director of the Lenape Seed Garden at the Delaware Tribe in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Thank you, Curtis, for teaching about the need to reconnect the Lenape people and Lenape knowledge back to Lenapehoking.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Delaware Tribe of Indians - [www.delawaretribe.org](http://www.delawaretribe.org)

Lenape Talking Dictionary - [www.talk-lenape.org](http://www.talk-lenape.org)

“Forced Removal of the Lenape People: History & Homecoming” Curtis Zunigha  
Lecture at The University of Scranton



## SOURCE MATERIAL

### Lenapehoking: An Anthology

editors Joe Baker, Hadrien Coumans, Joel Whitney  
Published 2022 by Brooklyn Public Library, N.Y.

### The Delaware Indians, A History

by C. A. Weslager, published 1972

### The Delaware Indian Westward Migration

by C.A. Weslager, published 1978

### Blackcoats Among the Delaware:

David Zeisberger on the Ohio Frontier

by Earl Olmstead, published 1991

### David Zeisberger: A Life Among the Indians

by Earl Olmstead, published 1997

### Wampum Belts & Peace Trees: George Morgan, Native Americans and Revolutionary Diplomacy

by Gregory Schaaf, published 1990

### Lenape Country, Delaware Valley Society Before William Penn

by Jean R. Soderlund, published 2015

### Pagans in the Promised Land:

Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery

by Steven T. Newcomb, published 2008

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# The Spirit of

# LENAPEHOKING

# in Nay Aug Park

# Reconnecting to the Culture & Horticulture of the Lenape Homeland



[scrantongreenhouse.org/lenape](http://scrantongreenhouse.org/lenape)

# LENAPEHOKING

Long before Europeans traveled to this land, the Indigenous people known as **Lenape** lived here. This centuries-old homeland was called **Lenapehoking**. Stretching from the Catskill Mountains of New York south through Pennsylvania to the Delaware Bay, it included what is now New York City, Philadelphia, Scranton and the Lackawanna River watershed.

The Lenape are a deeply spiritual people with a belief in a Creator (Kishelemukong) and a firm conviction that everything in creation has a spirit. Nature should always be given thanks, gifted with ceremonial blessings, and asked permission before taking from it. Lenape live to care for Mother Earth and all spiritual relations in return for life's abundance that takes care of them. Lenape lifeways always acknowledge the relationship with all spirits and a common respect for all of creation.

When Lenape people give songs of Thanksgiving for these gifts, it brings healing from deep historic and generational trauma. Songs of thanks are given for the knowledge and sacrifices of the ancestors, and Lenape feel a spiritual obligation to teach their children and grandchildren how to continue to nurture healthy relationships with all of creation.

During the forced removal of the Lenape people from Lenapehoking, the women smuggled seeds by sewing them into the folds of their clothes. In that way, both the seeds and the ancestral knowledge they contain survived - and are now slowly being returned to Lenapehoking, the homeland, the origin.

The foods of the ancestors carry many lessons about how to overcome some of the food-related health issues of our generation. Today, Indigenous people, who represent this ancestral knowledge, ought to be present at the tables where vital conversations regarding environmental and civic issues are taking place across the world.

*The seeds have a memory, the seeds have a spirit.*

When the seeds of the ancestors are rematriated back into Mother Earth, they have a memory that connects deep beneath the soil. They have an ancestral knowledge - about caring for one another.

The Lenape have a viewpoint - we don't own anything. We build familial relationships with all of creation, from the mountains to the water to the animals to the plants...all the way down to seeds. By offering our spirit and connecting with the spirit of the soil, the water, the air, we receive their lessons on how to take care of one another. When we put our fingers into the soil and connect with the spirit of the land, we open up **our** spirit to give the best that we can to these foods - so that they might come up to be healthy, nutritious, living, spiritual blessings.



Nature and Mother Earth are our teachers. From their ancient knowledge and wisdom, the Lenape learned how to take plants and seeds from the wild to create gardens for sustenance. In Lenape culture, it is the women who tend the garden because they possess a nurturing trait. The women became keepers of the seeds. This cultural connection is the heart of seed rematriation. Seeds are so much more than just commodities. The seeds have a living spirit and represent our ancestral pathways uniting them with the hands and lands that hold them.

Likewise the soil, the waters, and the air are spiritual relations. Lenape ancestors learned to achieve a harmonious balance of these relations - conducting ceremonies, offering medicines, prayers, and songs. Like them, we dance in honor of the plants, the rains, the sun, and the phases of the moon. And when the gift of an abundant harvest brings sustenance to our lives, we still hold the tradition of giving great thanksgiving ceremonies, sharing the spirit for continuous existence.

