



Companion Planting and Traditional Cooking

Lesson Description

Students learn about companion planting and traditional foods grown in the garden by reading **The Three Sisters** story and participating in a cooking demonstration with a Tribal Elder.

- Time required: 60 minutes
- Location of lesson: Classroom

Learning Objectives

- Define the concept of companion planting.
- Become familiar with **The Three Sisters** traditional story.
- Understand the importance of cooking traditional foods from the garden and connect with a Tribal Elder.

Attitude and Behavior Goals

- Like the taste of a wide variety of traditional, Native fruits and vegetables.
- Eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Teacher Background Information

- The cooking demonstration activity in this lesson may be taught by an invited Tribal Elder.
- The Elder may choose one of the suggested recipes or may demonstrate their own traditional recipe that includes vegetables.
- The class discussion and **The Three Sisters** activity should be taught by the Edible School Garden Program Teacher.

Materials and Preparation

- Spoons (disposable); at least 1 per student
- Bowls (disposable); at least 1 per student
- Paper towels or napkins; at least 1 per student
- Equipment and ingredients as per the recipe that will be used for the cooking demonstration (see the suggested recipes and the materials needed at the end of this lesson plan)
- Invite an Elder to lead the cooking demonstration
-  **The Three Sisters**
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

- *If you do not plan on doing the Cooking Traditional Foods activity, prepare vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student

Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer (5 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the  **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water together (*If you do not plan on doing the Cooking Traditional Foods activity, eat the veggie snack and have students complete their  **Taste Test Observations**).

Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)

- Review the evaluation questions from last week’s lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook .

Class Discussion (10 minutes)

Companion plants help each other grow or protect each other from pests. There are many plants that are companion plants and the Three Sisters are companion plants that are often grown on tribal lands. Which three plants make up the three sisters? (Answers: corn, beans and squash) Have you heard stories about the three sisters? There are many stories told about the three sisters and we will share one of those stories today.

We will also cook some traditional foods from the garden today. What are some traditional foods? Has anyone ever helped cook traditional foods before? What traditional foods do you enjoy eating?

Activities (35-40 minutes)

-  **“The Three Sisters” (10 minutes):** Students listen to a traditional story about companion planting and discuss its significance.
 1. Read the story **The Three Sisters**. The students can read along in their workbooks.
 2. Have a brief discussion with the students about the story:
 - a. *What did you notice about what the 3 women wore before changing into plants?*
 - b. *Based on this story, why do you think corn, beans, and squash are sometimes called “our supporters”?*
 - c. *The three sisters say to “take care of us as we return to you again”. What does this mean? What do we have to do to take care of them? (Answers: save seeds for next year, prepare soil, water them, pull out weeds, etc.)*

- d. *Why do you think these 3 plants are planted together?* (Answers: because they help each other. The corn provides support for the beans, the beans help make the soil better for the corn and the squash, and the squash shades the ground so that the ground stays cool and wet)
- **“Cooking Traditional Foods” (25-30 minutes):** Students participate in a cooking demonstration of traditional foods with a Tribal Elder.
 1. Please choose a traditional food recipe to prepare. The recipe can be from this lesson or a recipe the elder loves to cook.
 2. Have the Elder teach the students about cooking traditional foods. The recipe should include at least 1 of the three sisters and/or vegetables from the garden.

Three Sisters Soup

Equipment

- 1 large soup pot
- Stirring spoon
- Oven range or electric burner for cooking the soup
- Can opener
- Chopping knife
- Cutting board
- Potato peeler
- 1 cup measuring cup
- 1 Tablespoon measuring spoon

Ingredients (6 servings)

- 2 cups canned white or yellow hominy (or corn), drained
- 2 cups fresh green beans, trimmed and snapped
- 2 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash
- 1 ½ cups diced peeled potatoes
- 5 cups water
- 1 ½ tablespoons chicken bouillon granules
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Directions

Place the hominy, green beans, squash, and potatoes into a pot, and pour in water and chicken bouillon. Bring to a boil, and then reduce heat to low, and simmer until vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes. Blend flour into the butter. Then stir into the soup. Increase heat to medium, and cook for 5 more minutes, or until soup thickens. Season with pepper, and serve.

Nutritional Content: 150 calories per serving, total fat 4.7g (2.6g saturated fat), 3.3 g protein, 3.1g sugars, 107% vitamin A, 39% vitamin C, 7% calcium.

Succotash

Equipment

- Large nonstick skillet
- Stirring spoon
- Cutting board
- Chopping knife
- 1 cup measuring cup
- 1 tablespoon measuring spoon
- 1/8 teaspoon measuring spoon

Ingredients (8-10 servings)

- 1 ½ cups frozen corn kernels, thawed (you can use fresh corn kernels-about 3 ears)
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped summer squash
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup defatted chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/8 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1/8 teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 cups frozen baby lima beans, thawed

Directions

Place a large nonstick skillet over high heat until hot. Add corn, red pepper, onion, and cumin. Sauté 5 minutes until vegetables are slightly blackened. Add summer squash, olive oil, and garlic, sautéing for an additional minute. Reduce heat to medium-high, add broth and remaining ingredients. Cook 3-5 minutes or until heated through, stirring frequently.

Nutritional Content: 98 calories per serving, percent fat calories 16%, sodium 127 mg, cholesterol less than 1 mg.

Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)

1. *What are companion plants?* (Answer: plants that help each other grow or protect each other from pests)
2. *What are the three plants that make up the three sisters garden?* (Answers: corn, beans, squash)
3. *How does the corn help?* (Answer: pole for beans to climb)
4. *How does the squash help?* (Answers: leaves shade the ground to keep the soil cool and wet and to discourage weeds, the spikes help keep bugs and animals away)
5. *How do the beans help?* (Answers: add nutrients to the soil, help stabilize the corn in the wind too)
6. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)
7. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
8. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor

- This is the last lesson plan of the fall semester. After all 10 fall lessons have been completed, remember to hold a review session with the students. The Jeopardy review game should be used to engage the students in a review of all that they learned this fall.

Notes
