Resources

There are many local, indigenous-led organizations that you can learn from or donate to, to support the ongoing indigenous stewardship of land, water, arts, and culture. Below are just a few of these organizations.

Niamuck Land Trust

Niamuck Land Trust works to protect, preserve, and purchase burial sites and other culturally significant sites sacred to the Shinnecock Nation and their neighboring indigenous communities.

niamucklandtrust.org

Shinnecock Kelp Farmers

Shinnecock Kelp Farmers is a multi-generational collective, leveraging our 10,000+-year-old traditional relationship with the sea and with seaweed to capture carbon and nitrogen that has poisoned the waters of Shinnecock Bay and beyond.

shinnecockkelpfarmers.com

Lenape Center

Lenape Center has the mission of continuing Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland through community, culture, and the arts.

thelenapecenter.com

RedHawk Native American Arts Council

The Redhawk Native American Arts Council, led by Indigenous American artists, performers, and educators residing in New York and New Jersey, is dedicated to supporting the urban Indigenous community and educating the general public about Indigenous American heritage through song, dance, theater, and other works of art and cultural forms of expression.

redhawkcouncil.org

Living Land Acknowledgement

Queens Botanical Garden acknowledges that it is situated on the traditional land of the Matinecock people, the first people of Flushing, Queens. We pay respect to the Matinecock people, past, present, and future, their ancestors who have stewarded the land for generations, and their continuing presence on this land today. We honor these origins by continuing to steward the land with sustainable practices, love for community, and commitment to equity, as well as helping to educate the public about the history, significance, contributions, and impact of indigenous peoples and culture.

We thank Tecumseh Ceaser, Artist and Cultural Consultant of the Matinecock Tribal Nation, for his guidance as we reflect on our acknowledgement.

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Queens Botanical Garden

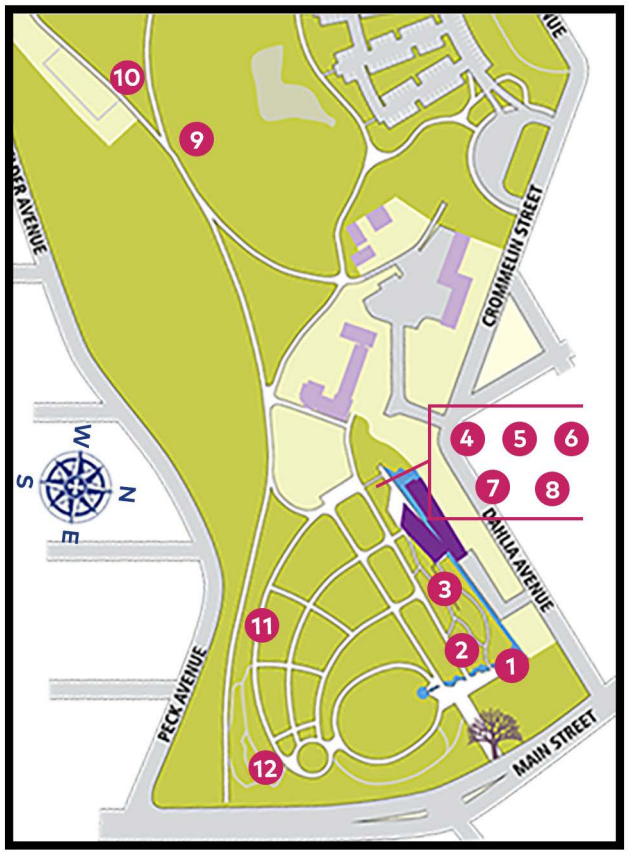
43-50 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355 • queensbotanical.org

Indigenous Heritage Plant Guide

Queens Botanical Garden | Where people, plants, and cultures meet.

Indigenous Heritage Plant Map

Explore the Garden to spot and observe some of the plants in our collections that have been used and cultivated by many Indigenous Peoples around the world, including First Nations cultures across North and South America.



On the Cover

Corn, or maize, is one of the most well-known plants used by Indigenous Peoples. First domesticated over 10,000 years ago in southern Mexico, it is now a staple food around the world. On the QBG Farm, we work with indigenous farmers to restore native heirloom varieties and we grow corn in the Native American "Three Sisters" companion planting method where corn is planted alongside beans and squash.

Cattail
Typha latifolia

Locaton: Entry Plaza Waterway

This common native wetland plant and its many relatives are grown and used by people all over the world. Many parts of the plant are edible and can be both survival foods and cuisine staples of many of the First Peoples of North America.

Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus
Opuntia humifusa

Location: Constructed Wetland

Native across the lower 48 states, prickly pear has been used by Native Americans to treat wounds, warts, and lung ailments. Its fruits can be eaten raw and are often used in jams or juices, and the pad or nopal can be cut and cooked like a vegetable or brewed as a tea.

Tulip Tree
Liriodendron tulipifera

Location: V&A Building Garden

One of our largest native trees, growing to nearly 200 feet tall, it has distinct tulip-shaped flowers and leaves. Their easily carvable, large, straight trunks made these trees preferable for making enormous dugout canoes built by many Native peoples in our area.

White Sage
Savia apina

Location: Herb Garden

This perennial shrub likes dry, sandy soil and provides ample food for a variety of pollinators. Sage is part of many ceremonies across Turtle Island (N. America) and is also used as food and healing tea.

Purple Amaranth
Amaranthus cruentus

Location: Herb Garden

This plant has been in cultivation by the Native People of the Americas for approximately 8,000 years for its seeds and beautiful colors. One traditional Indigenous Andean dessert involves popping the seeds and making a brittle candy by mixing them with honey.

Mexican Tarragon
Tagetes lucida

Location: Herb Garden

This marigold relative loves well-drained soil and lots of sun. Native to Central America, and used by the Aztecs in a ritual incense known as *yauhtli*, it was one of the ingredients in the drink *chocolatl* (a precursor of chocolate) that added to its spicy flavor.

Lemon Verbena
Aloysia citrodora

Location: Herb Garden

This South American plant was one of the many natural resources exported by Spanish colonizers to Europe in the early seventeenth century. It bears the name of a Spanish princess, Louisa de Parma, yet its original name in Quechua, the indigenous language spoken primarily in the Peruvian Andres, is *Sach'a*.

Tobacco
Nicotiana tabacum

Location: Herb Garden

This cultivated version of wild tobacco is grown both ornamentally and for smoking. It is considered a sacred gift by many Indigenous Peoples and used for generations for spiritual and medicinal purposes. It is central to culture, spirituality, and healing.

Pawpaw
Asimina triloba

Location: Arboretum

This tree is the largest edible native fruit tree and the only member of a tropical tree family in N. America. Indigenous people use the fruit for food, the seeds as insect repellent, and the inner bark as weaving material.

Paper Birch
Betula papyrifera

Location: Arboretum

This fast-growing tree is named for its white bark that often peels like pages in a book. Peoples throughout northern N. America value the wood and bark for building, crafting, fire starting, and as a favorite winter food for moose and white-tailed deer.

Staghorn Sumac
Rhus typhina

Location: Perennial garden

Its velvety young branches are similar to newly grown deer antlers, giving this small tree its name. The sticky clusters of red fruits are rich in vitamin C and have been used to add sweet and tart flavors to Indigenous foods.

Goldenrod
Solidago spp.

Location: Woodland Garden

These native plants spread their bright yellow flowers throughout the land and feed pollinators from late summer into late autumn. "Solidago" means "to make whole." It is a valued Native medicine for treating many ailments from depression to healing wounds.