Welcome to the Abenaki Heritage Garden at the Intervale in Burlington, Vermont

The Abenaki Heritage Garden is a partnership of the St. Francis/Sokoki Band of the Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi, Burlington Area Community Gardens, the Intervale Center, UVM’s Environmental Program, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Friends of Burlington Gardens, Gardener’s Supply, and the Sacred Seeds Network.

A partnership of:
St. Francis/Sokoki Band of the Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi
Burlington Area Community Gardens, a program of Burlington Parks and Recreation
Intervale Center
UVM Environmental Program
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Friends of Burlington Gardens
Gardener’s Supply

Support for the Abenaki Heritage Garden is generously provided by New Chapter and Will and Lynette Rapp.

THE THREE SISTERS

Corn, beans and squash are the main crops of the Abenaki Heritage Garden. These traditional crops have fed generations of people at the Intervale and beyond. These crops have been grown in the area for centuries, and were chosen based on historical records, expert advice and guidance from elders in the Abenaki community.

IN THE GARDEN

THE THREE SISTERS

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The St. Francis/Sokoki Band of the Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi is part of Vermont’s Burlington Area Community Gardens, a program of Burlington Parks and Recreation, and the Intervale Center. The Abenaki Heritage Garden is managed by the Intervale Center.

The Intervale Center manages 350 acres of farmland, nursery, trails, and wildlife corridors along the Winooski River. Our mission is to strengthen community food systems. The Abenaki Heritage Garden honors the culture and agricultural tradition of the land we are proud to steward.

IN THE GARDEN

THE THREE SISTERS

ABENAKI & THE INTERVALE

The garden is located at the Intervale Center, 180 Intervale Road, Burlington, Vermont

Visit: The garden is open to the public for self-guided tours during daylight hours. Guided tours are available by reservation.

Volunteer: We welcome community members and school groups to help with planting, weeding, harvest, and special events.

Contact: To volunteer or sign up for a tour, contact Rob Hunt at 660-0440 x106 or rob@intervale.org

PARTNERS

The Abenaki Tribal Museum & Abenaki Self-Help Association 100 Grand Ave., Swanton, VT 05401
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Burlington Area Community Gardens Department of Parks and Recreation 645 Pine St., Suite B, Burlington, VT 05401
www.enjoyburlington.com

UVM’s Environmental Program www.uvm.edu/~envprog/

Friends of Burlington Gardens www.burlingtongardens.org

Sacred Seeds Network www.sacredseedsnetwork.org

Gardener’s Supply www.gardeners.com

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Three Sisters Planting

The three main crops — corn, beans, and squash — are in hills much as the Abenaki would have planted their crops.

Discussions with Native American elders and research of the historical record indicate that although all Native American tribes planted in hills, different tribes had different strategies based on the local environment and the varieties of seed they planted. These strategies varied in the distance between hills, the size of the hills themselves, and the number and type of seeds planted in the hills.

The hills here are 24 to 30 inches in diameter and spaced about 6 feet apart on center. Each hill contains 4 corn seeds, 4 bean seeds, and 2 to 4 squash seeds.

The corn is planted toward the four directions — East, West, North, and South. Beans are planted between the corn around the circle, and the squash is planted on the periphery of the hill.

The corn provides a natural pole for the climbing beans, which fix nitrogen on their roots, improving the overall fertility of the soil. The squash vines provide shade to keep the soil moist and inhibit weeds.

The nine varieties of squash grown in the garden represent different harvest times, use, and storage. The summer squash — White Bush Scallop and Yellow Crookneck — mature early and are used fresh throughout the summer. They are planted in the mounds on the north end of the garden. The winter squash are planted in the center mounds. These varieties — Table Queen Acorn, Burgess Buttercup, Waltham Butternut, Boston Marrow, and Blue Hubbard — are used when ripe and store well over the winter.

The New England Pie and Connecticut Field pumpkins are planted on the southern-most mounds. They are usually sliced and dried for use over the winter.

What’s in the Garden?

**Roy’s Calais Flint Corn** is an excellent Vermont flint corn that was bred by Elwyn Meader, the first white child born in Lubec. This is one of the oldest varieties of corn. Popcorn was dried and stored, flint corn was ground for flour, and other varieties were eaten fresh. The varieties of corn planted here are Roy’s Calais Flint, Koasek, and Tom Thumb Popcorn.

**Burgess Buttercup Squash** is thought to have been derived from a Native American squash from the Northeast. Waltham Butternut Squash is thought to have been derived from a Native American squash common in the Northeast and Canada. This particular variety used the Canadian Crookneck as parent stock. Boston Marrow Squash was originally obtained from Native Americans in Buffalo, New York. It is fine-grained with a sweet flesh and has excellent eating qualities.

**Blue Hubbard Squash** is an old variety that stores well. It is most likely derived from New England squashes and is related to the Boston Marrow. New England Pie Pumpkin is thought to have been developed from a small Native American pumpkin common in the Northeast.

**Jerusalem Artichoke** is a cross of two different sunflowers. It produces tubers that can be eaten much like potatoes. The tubers store well in the ground through the winter, so they can be harvested in the fall or spring.

**Sweetgrass** is aromatic perennial grass that is sacred in the Abenaki. Its long leaves have a sweet scent that stays potent for many years when woven into baskets or baskets. It is also used for smudging ceremonies, as a purifier, and some drink it as a tea.

**Tobacco** is a sacred plant grown for ceremonial use. Planting and care was the responsibility of men. They planted it in small fenced plots and dried both flowers and leaves for smoking.

This garden was established in solidarity with the Abenaki Heritage Garden at Missisquoi, located at the Abenaki Tribal Headquarters in Swanton. The food grown at both gardens is distributed within the Abenaki community and greater Swanton area.

For more information about the Sister Garden in Swanton, contact the Abenaki Self-Help Association at sogomo@comcast.net.