

Several of Arizona's Native Tribes operate successful modern farms, using varieties of standard agricultural practices. However, many agricultural conservation practices have roots in native traditions and knowledge. A select few native agricultural traditions are discussed below.

**Companion or Guild Planting** - planting different crops together rather than in the separate fields of conventional agriculture

- Each plant benefits from the contributions of nutrients, structure, and/or shade from the others.
- The Three Sisters—beans, squash, and maize—are the primary example of companion planting.
- A diet based on the Three Sisters is nutritionally complete and healthy.
- The Three Sisters have cultural significance that connects the farmer to the land.



*The Three Sisters by Anna Juchnowicz*



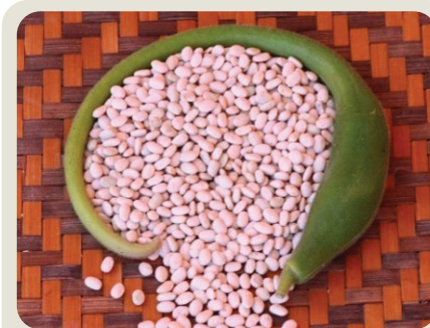
*Corn grown on Hopi land with dryland farming techniques.*

**Dryland Farming** - farming without irrigation

- Crops grow with as little as 10 inches of yearly rainfall and often are cultivated by hand.
- Corn—perhaps the most important crop for many Native American tribes—is planted deep in carefully selected locations.
- Farming in these conditions relies on generational knowledge and familiarity with the land.

**Desert-adapted Crops** - the selection and cultivation of seeds adapted to local conditions

- Farmers select the seeds of successful plants from the recent harvest to use the following season.
- Successive seasons of this practice produce crops adapted to the needs of the land.
- This adaptation is critical for farm sustainability and land stewardship.



*Tohono O'odham White Tepary beans (image from Nativeseeds.org)*