

6 - The Heritage Garden

Mixing Old with New



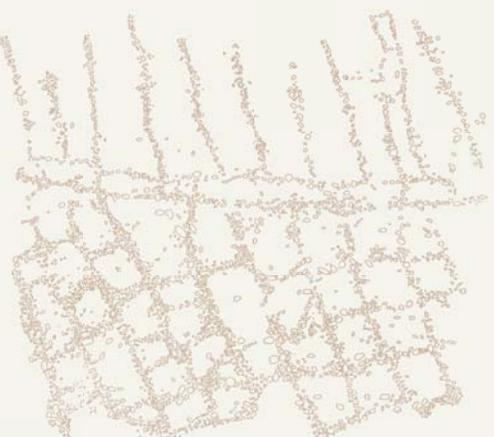
With five streams draining into the Verde River and many natural springs emanating from the Mogollon Rim to the North, the Verde Valley became an agricultural mecca in a desert landscape. Both the Hohokam and Southern Sinagua people diverted water from these sources to irrigate their crops, although dry farming methods were used in some areas of the Valley as well.

By creating rock grid gardens next to natural washes, monsoon rains could be captured to irrigate crops in areas far from rivers and streams, as seen in this illustration of a garden site at Sacred Mountain.

Similarly, our garden is not near a water source. We have constructed a series of rock terraces to capture and hold rainwater when available. To ensure success we will also employ the modern method of drip irrigation.

What has not changed is our crops. These seeds, originally sourced from the Hopi Mesas have been grown in the Verde Valley for over 10 years and mirror those seeds found at the nearby Dyck Cliff Dwelling.

These crops, plus indigenous plants, would provide the early inhabitants with all their food, clothing and utilitarian needs.



Important Native Plants

Besides domesticated garden crops early inhabitants utilized native plants. Some plants were used as a food source while others provided materials for baskets, cordage, foot wear and other household needs as well as medicinal uses. Some plants like agave may have been selectively bred for desirable characteristics. The Verde Valley is home to a number of unique species of agaves not found anywhere else and thought to be the result of this selective breeding.

Look around and you will see some of these natives that we planted in our garden.

This garden area is made possible through a generous donation by Donalyn Milkes through the Kling Family Foundation.



Hopi Black Dye Sunflower
Used to dye textiles and basketry. The seeds impart a color-fast purple to indigo color. The seeds can be boiled and skinned for oil.



Hopi Red Dye Amaranth
Highly nutritious, amaranth has edible leaves and tiny seeds that can be popped or eaten as a grain. The Hopis use the plant to dye their famous piki bread.



Corn
Most early corns were of the flour or flint varieties. Though they could be eaten green, most were dried and ground into flour that could be made into cakes or mush.



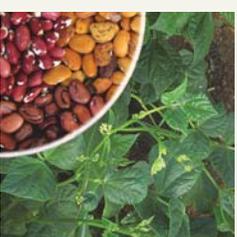
Gourds
Gourds make excellent canteens for travel in the desert. They were also used for water dippers, bowls, storage containers, rattles and dums.



Cotton
The Sinaguans were expert textile artists and used cotton for their clothing, string, cordage and head bands for carrying burdens.



Squash
The Green-striped Cushaw squash was grown by many tribes in the Southwest. It is drought tolerant and could be stored for many months.



Beans
Both Lima and common beans were grown by the natives and would have been an important source of protein in their diets.



Agave
Agaves were prized for their edible roots which were roasted in rock-lined fire pits. Their leaves are used for fiber and the leaf tip for needles.



Yucca
Yuccas were pounded for their fibers which could be used for cordage, clothing and sandals. Banana Yuccas have an edible fruit.



Devil's Claw
The horns of the ripened fruit provided tough fibers that were used in basketry.



Yellow Bee Weed
Bee weed can be cooked down to form pottery paint, either by itself or in addition to minerals as a binder. It is also used medicinally.