

KAS RADIO - Episode 1

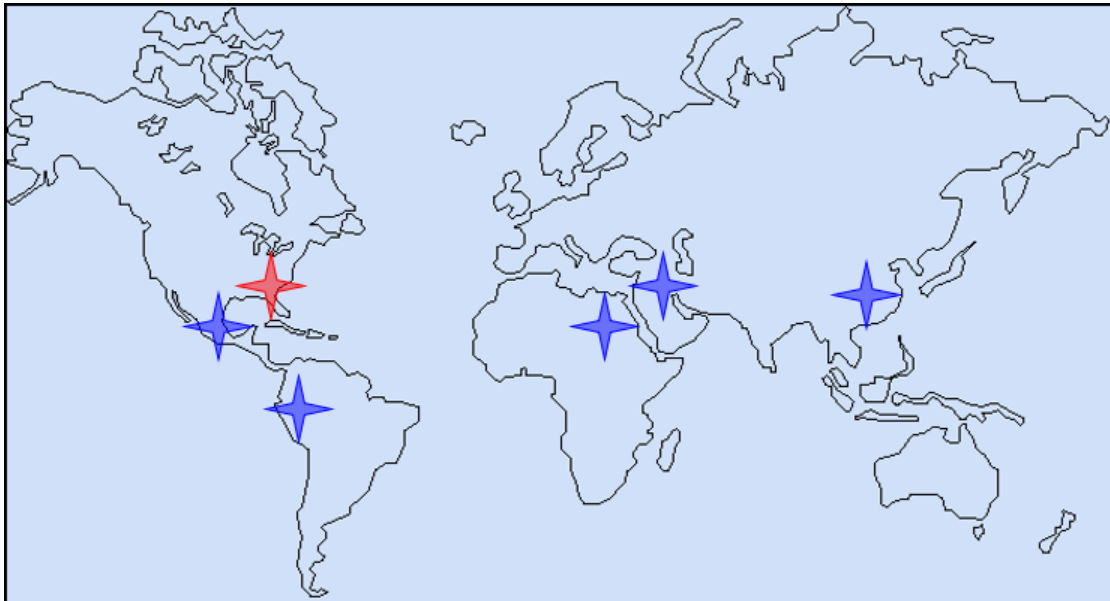
Native Plant Domestication In Kentucky A *Think History* Radio Spot

Episode Transcript

Throughout human history, people adapted local wild plants for human use in only six places on earth.

In Mexico, the wild plant was corn. In Peru, it was the potato. The Middle East is where people domesticated wheat and barley, and in Southeast Asia, rice was the focus. Soybeans and millet were domesticated in Africa.

Kentucky rounds out this exclusive club. Here, Native residents domesticated pepo squash and two weedy annuals: goosefoot and sunflower.



Hearths of plant domestication - Kentucky is the red star. *Credit: Living Archaeology Weekend Steering Committee 2009.*

Meaty, thin-skinned squash provides fiber, vitamins, minerals, and folic acid. Its seeds are good sources of oil and protein. Tiny starchy goosefoot seeds are packed with minerals and certain amino acids. Sunflower seeds are a good source of healthy oils and fats.

Kentucky's Native peoples began domesticating these local plants over 3000 years ago. Over the next two millennia, they became Kentucky's very first farmers.

Kentucky's Domesticated Native Plants



Pepo Squash



Goosefoot



Sunflower

Kentucky's ancient Native gardeners domesticated these three plants, and another not shown - marsh elder. Native gardeners also cultivated, but did not domesticate, maygrass, erect knotweed, giant ragweed, and little barley. This group of eight native plants are referred to as the Eastern Agricultural Complex.

To Read More about how and when Kentucky's ancient Native peoples domesticated Native plants, go to:

Foreword - Seed Saving: An Ancient Kentucky Tradition by A. Gwynn Henderson, pages ix-xxv in **Kentucky Heirloom Seeds: Growing, Eating, Saving** by Bill Best with Doree Adams, published in 2017 by the University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.

People and Plants in Ancient Eastern North America, edited by Paul E Minnis, published in 2003 by Smithsonian Books, Washington, D.C.

The Earliest Occurrence of a Newly Described Domesticated in Eastern North America: Adena/Hopewell Communities and Agricultural Innovation by Natalie G. Mueller, published in 2018 by the *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, volume 49, pages 39-50.



Listen to *Think History* on WEKU-FM Radio 88.9 at 8:19 am and again at 5:19 pm every Monday through Friday.