



Corn! Zea Maize, to Botanists,

Was unknown to the English Immigrants of the 17th century as it did not exist in the old world. It was the Indians of New England who would introduce them to this easily cultivated, high energy crop that would sustain them when the traditional grains of Europe failed.

Biologically, corn is a grass which requires nitrogen and generates complex sugars, and protein by photosynthesis through its broad leaves. It is supported by a dual root system and rigid stalk with nodes that grow leaves and two or three ears and topped by a tassel. The nodal roots penetrate deep to draw moisture and nutrients while brace roots fix the plant to the earth working together to give corn its resilience to adverse weather.

The origin of corn dates back at least 7000 years in Mexico from a plant called teosinte, bearing ears about one inch long. The modified form of teosinte moved north with the natives, eventually reaching New England about 1000 years ago. But how did it turn into corn? The answer lies in the fact that each plant has both female (ears) and male (tassel) parts and is one of the most easily genetically modified plants known. Our early American Natives bred generations of corn for thousands of years to produce the varieties that would hold up to extremes of weather and pests to reliably produce grain through the same process that Dekalb would employ on Denison land hundreds of years

later, only they did it without the benefit of modern technology!

By the time of George Denison's arrival the hard work of perfecting this vital crop was done and thankfully so, as the great migration ended in 1642 and very few new immigrants would arrive here until the 1840s making survival of the descendants of those early Anglicans crucial to our existence today. Please keep this historic fact in mind as well as the fact that corn requires nitrogen as we examine the next of the three sisters...

R.E.Burkett, Trustee