

## Maya Planting – Three Seed Farming



Puku B

The Maya are very good at getting the best from their fields, they started growing crops around 2500 BC in ways which could successfully feed large cities. They used a method called slash and burn or swidden to clear the jungle and then used the field for 2 to 3 years before letting it return to jungle.

They didn't have animals to pull a plough, so everything had to be done by hand. After cutting and burning the trees the farmer would use a long stick called a digging stick to make holes. To make the best use of their time and the land they planted several seeds in one hole. Less work but also these plants work together to help keep the soil fertile for growing.

Have a go planting like a Maya farmer.

### Three Seed Farming

Pot

Soil (I have used compost but any soil will work)

Bean seeds

Tomato seeds

Corn seeds



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Put soil into the pots until they are around  $\frac{3}{4}$  full



Put in the tomato seed



Put in the bean seed



Put in the corn seed



All of your seeds will be in the same container like this. This means that as the plants grow the corn will provide a stake for the tomatoes and beans to grow up. The bean can be wrapped like a string to hold the tomato to the corn. Even better the bean released nutrients that help the corn and tomato to grow and produce food.



Cover everything over with soil and then place on a sunny window sill and be patient! It could take a few weeks before the plants start poking their heads through the soil.



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Do you think this is a good use of time and space?

The Maya also grew squash, marrows, pumpkins, sunflowers, cacao (chocolate), papaya, pineapple and nuts.

What meals could you make using these ingredients?

What foods can you find in your house that the ancient Maya ate?

Please post pictures of your growing plants on our Facebook page

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