



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You



Osiyo -

Preservation of Cherokee heritage comes in a wide array of forms. We have Cherokee Nation preservationists in areas like language, which is spoken and written. We have song and dance traditionalists, and we have master artisans devoted to traditional Cherokee arts like carving, pottery and basket weaving. However, during my tenure as Principal Chief, one of the most popular and highly participatory efforts has been food preservation through the Cherokee Nation seed bank program.

Our effort, led by Senior Director of Environmental Resources Pat Gwin, is something that just about any Cherokee nationwide can do and enjoy with their family. For Cherokee Nation citizens, it is a way to perpetuate crops that Cherokee people have relied on for generations.

Despite a difficult growing season in 2017, Cherokee Nation's seed bank will offer an assortment of seeds this year. In 2017, we issued about 3,785 seed packages to tribal citizens and estimate to do about 5,000 this year. Requests for heirloom seeds will run through the end of April.

The heirloom seeds possess traits that any grower desires, including being drought and pest resistant and having low fertilization needs. The seed bank, which originally started in 2006, has a supply stock that is healthy, strong and unique to the Cherokee people.

Historically, our people have always been exceptional agriculturalists, and our ancestors farmed these same crops for hundreds of years. It connects who we are today as Cherokee people to our rich history, is something we can share with our kids and grandkids, and promotes healthy food consumption and physical activity. Anything we can do to encourage a new generation of Cherokees to connect with their tribal heritage is worth pursuing.

Applicants are limited to two varieties of seeds, and each request must include a copy the Cherokee Nation tribal citizenship card, as well as proof of age and address.

To submit an order, visit <https://secure.cherokee.org/seedbank> and create an account. Follow the instructions to see a complete list of available seeds and to place and track orders. For more information, email seedbank@cherokee.org or call 918-453-5336.

The seeds that are available this year include:

Corn

Cherokee Flour (a large flour corn)

Colored (multicolored)

White

Yellow

Cherokee White Eagle (a dent corn)

Beans

Cherokee Long Greasy

Trail of Tears (a small jet black bean)

Turkey Gizzard Black

Turkey Gizzard Brown

Squash

Georgia Candy Roaster (a long storing squash that can be prepared as squash, sweet potatoes or pumpkin)

Gourds

Basket

Dipper

Jewel

Buffalo Gourds

Trail of Tears Beads

Indian Corn Beads

Tobacco

Native Tobacco (ceremonial tobacco, not smoking tobacco; restricted to those at least 18 years of age)

Native Plants

Buttonbush

Cutleaf Coneflower

Hearts-a-bustin

Jewelweed

New Jersey Tea

Possum Grape

Purple Coneflower

Rattlesnake Master

Rivercane

Sunchoke

Wild Senna

Wado

Bill John Baker



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