



# TEOSINTE NEWS

SPECIAL AGRONOMY PROJECT - 2021

A HOW-TO GUIDE  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY NEBRASKA EXTENSION



## GETTING STARTED...

### PLANTING AND CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

Direct seed after last frost when soils have warmed to 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit. Being a warm season grass like corn, plant in an area with full sun that is well drained. Plant at a depth of 1-2", with 6-8 inches between seeds in the row. Rows should be 30-40" inches apart. Seeds will take 4-14 days to germinate. Like corn, teosinte should respond to the addition of some nitrogen fertilizer.

### EXHIBITING AT THE FAIR

**Educational Exhibit** - Explain what was learned from the project. Present information on a poster 14" X 22" either vertical or horizontal arrangement or in a clear plastic report cover. (state fair class G750011)

**Special Agronomy Project** -Video Presentation - 4-H exhibitor designs a multimedia presentation related to the crop. This could include narration of the growing process, presenting facts about the crop or any other innovative multimedia practices. The presentation should be at least 2 minutes in length and no more than 5 minutes in length, appropriate graphics, sound and either a video clip, animation or voice over and/or original video clip. (G750012)

**Freshly Harvested Crop** - Plant exhibits must be the result of the current year's project. (G750013)

- Corn - 10 ears or 3 stalks (cut at ground level with no roots or soil and bound together)

## WHAT'S INSIDE

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How to grow & exhibit at the fair

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Origin, History & Fun Facts about Teosinte

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Complete the evaluation!





## INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT TEOSINTE

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DR. TOM HOEGEMEYER, NEBRASKA NATIVE AND COMMERCIAL CORN BREEDER

**ORIGIN:** Corn was developed from Teosinte, a bunchgrass, in a valley near Mexico City, Mexico likely over 9,000 years ago! Teosinte typically has a very long growing season, taking up to 180 days to produce seed!

The climate that teosinte was grown in was:

- Elevation ≈ 7400 ft. (Above Sea Level)
- July Highs = 85-88 F
- July Lows = 55 F

Native American women changed corn more than modern breeders!

- **FROM:** A tropical, annual or perennial grass with multiple "heads" that hold individual seeds enclosed in a rock-hard fruitcase.
- **TO:** An annual grass with separate male and female flowers, and cobs with many rows of seeds with no hard fruitcase

It evolved over time....

Native Americans adapted corn to wherever they moved and bred for their needs or preferences.

They saved varieties that worked in their environment and based on different types of food or purposes.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Today's corn hybrids can't survive without humans! Modern corn has been bred to keep its seed on the cob. As a result, corn has no efficient way to spread its seeds other than the ear falling off the plant or seeds getting eaten by animals. Falling off the plant and all the seeds growing together doesn't work that well... Remember that hard seed coating on teosinte? That helped protect the seed when eaten so most of today's softer corn seeds wouldn't survive being eaten!

Complete the evaluation by October 1st for your name to be entered in a prize drawing.

<https://go.unl.edu/specialagronomyeval>

