



Grade Level: K-2

Essential Skills: 4, 5, 9

CCSS: K.RF.1, K.RI.1, K.RI.10, K.SL.1, 1.RI.1, 1.SL.1, 2.RI.1, 2.SL.1

Social Science: 2.17

NGSS: K-LS1-1, 2-LS2-1

Time: 50 minutes

Materials:

Three Sisters Coloring Garden Kit* or:

Per Student

- 1 plastic glove*
- 5 cotton balls*
- 2 seeds of each of the following: squash, beans and corn*
- *Three Sisters Coloring Booklet**
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Glue

*Included in the kit from Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom

AITC Library Resources:

Books:

Our School Garden
Pumpkins
How many seeds in a pumpkin?
From Seed to Pumpkin

More Lessons:

Turf Buddies
Seed, Soil, Sun
Living Necklaces

Lesson to Grow

Three Sisters Coloring Garden

Description:

Students will investigate the “three sisters” crops (corn, beans, and squash) and explore the benefit to planting these crops together.

Activity Directions:

Part 1: Introduction to Vegetables

1. Read the book *The Vegetables we Eat* by Gail Gibbons.

2. Ask students the following questions:

- a. Why are vegetables an important part of our diet?
- b. What are the basic needs of plants?

3. Explain to students that vegetables are a very important part of our diets and Native American’s diets. Today, we are going to explore the three vegetables that many Native American tribes refer to as the “Three Sisters.”

Part 2: Legend of the Three Sisters

1. Ask your students if they know what a legend is. After students have offered their own ideas and prior knowledge, explain to your students that a legend is a way of passing stories from generation to generation. Legends are very important in many Native American cultures.

2. Explain to your class that they will be investigating the legend of the “Three Sisters” which focuses on growing food using techniques by some Native Americans. The “three sisters” refers to three vegetable crops that were commonly planted together – corn, beans and squash.

3. Provide each student with a copy of the *Three Sisters Coloring Booklet*. Read through the booklet as a class having students complete each page by coloring the pictures. On the page where each “sister” is introduced there is a circle. Provide each student with a single seed that corresponds with the picture to paste in the circle.

4. Optional: The back page of the booklet contains a place for students to document the germination progress of their seeds that they will complete in Part 3 of the lesson.

Part 3: Planting a Three Sisters Garden

Allow students the opportunity to explore the three sisters growing through germination in a glove.

1. Instruct students to write their name on the palm section of a clear plastic glove with a marker. Also, label each finger with the following each type of seed they will be planting in the glove.

2. Dip five cotton balls in water. Give each cotton ball 3 flat squeezes to wring out excess water.

3. Place the provided seeds on a small paper plate or paper towel and pick up with a moistened cotton ball.

4. Put the cotton ball with the seeds attached into the matching labeled finger in your glove. **Teacher Tip:** You may need to use a pencil to get the cotton ball all the way to the tips of the glove fingers.

5. Repeat steps three and four with the additional cotton balls and seeds.

6. Tape the glove to a window, chalkboard, or wall. A clothesline can also be used with clothespins holding the gloves on the line.

7. Germination will take place in 3-5 days. The cotton balls should stay moist through germination. If one or more appear dry you can add a little water with an eyedropper or spray bottle. Germinated seeds can be transplanted in 1-2 weeks. Cut the tip off each finger and pull out the germinated seeds (cotton ball and all), and transplant into a container with soil.

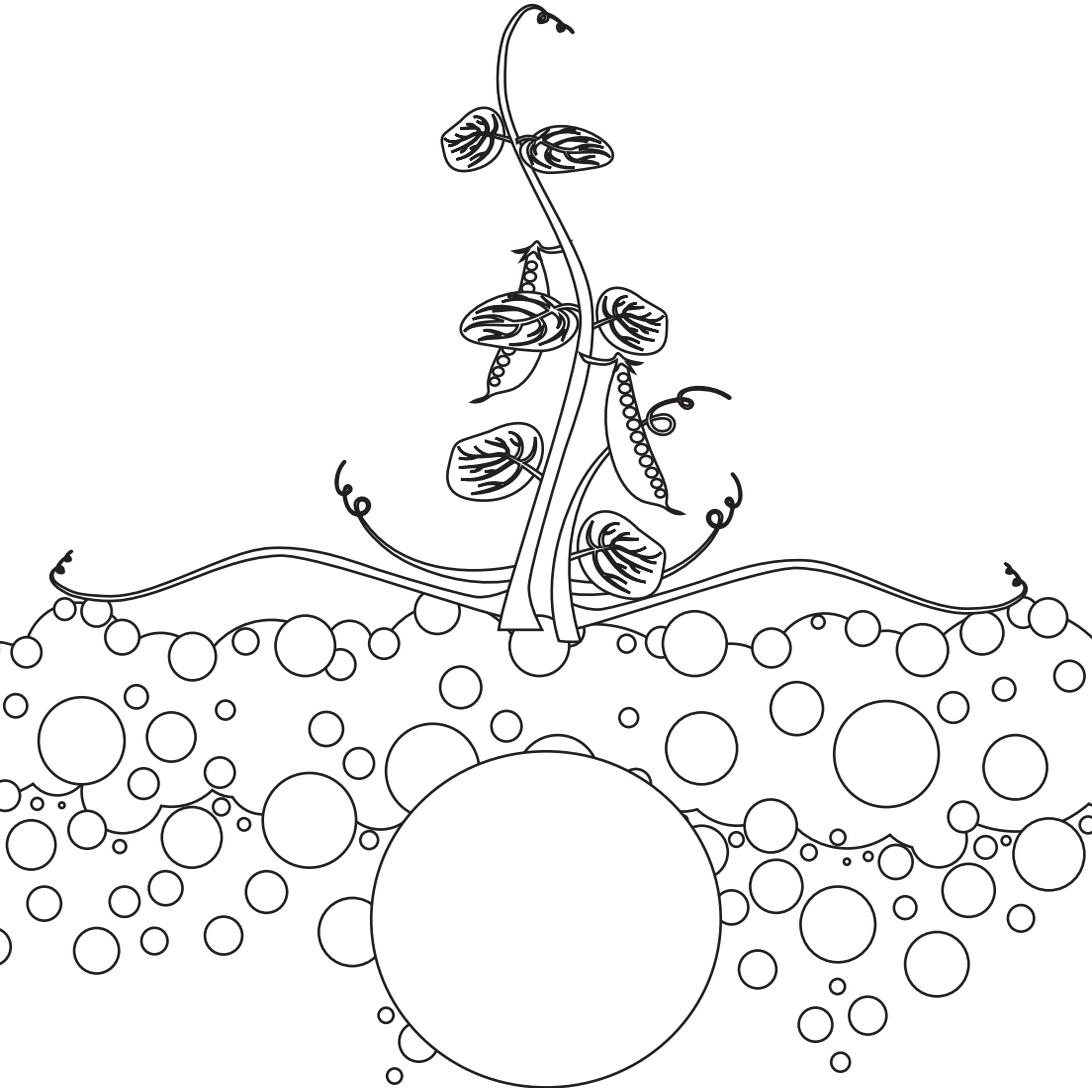
The Legend of the Three Sisters



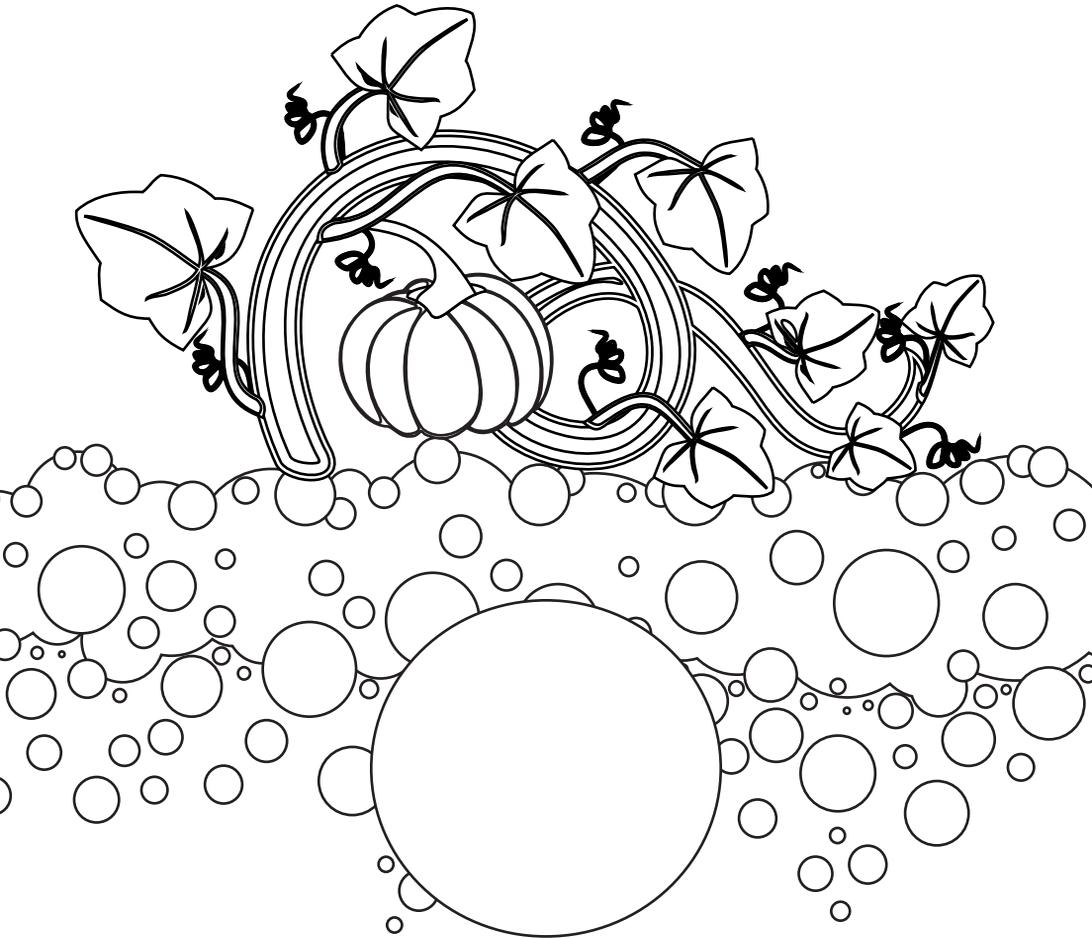
Colored By: _____



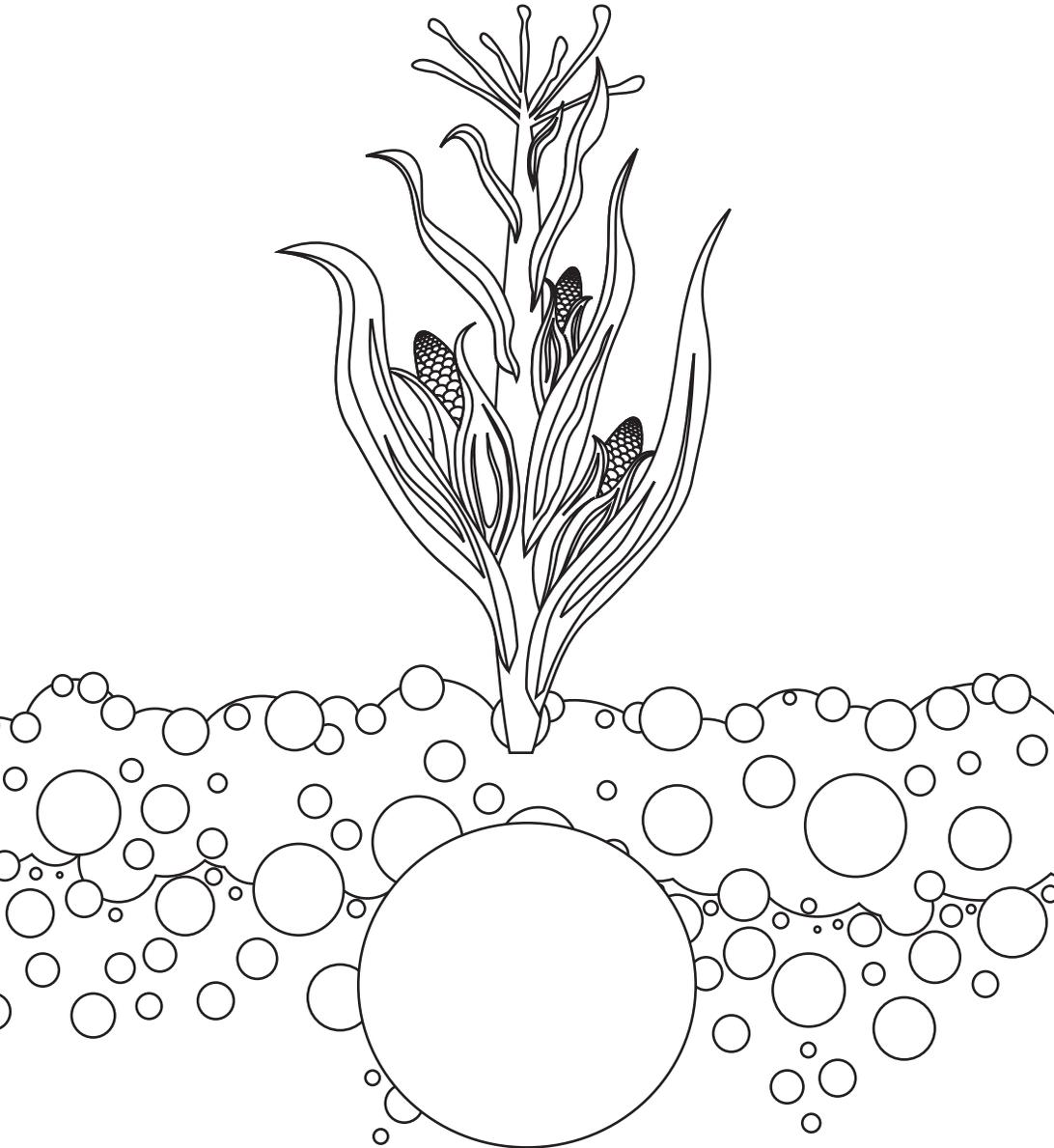
A long time ago there were three sisters who lived together in a field. These sisters were quite different from one another in their size and way of dressing. The little sister was so young that she could only crawl at first, and she was dressed in green.



The second sister wore a bright yellow dress, and she had a way of running off by herself when the sun shone and the soft wind blew in her face.



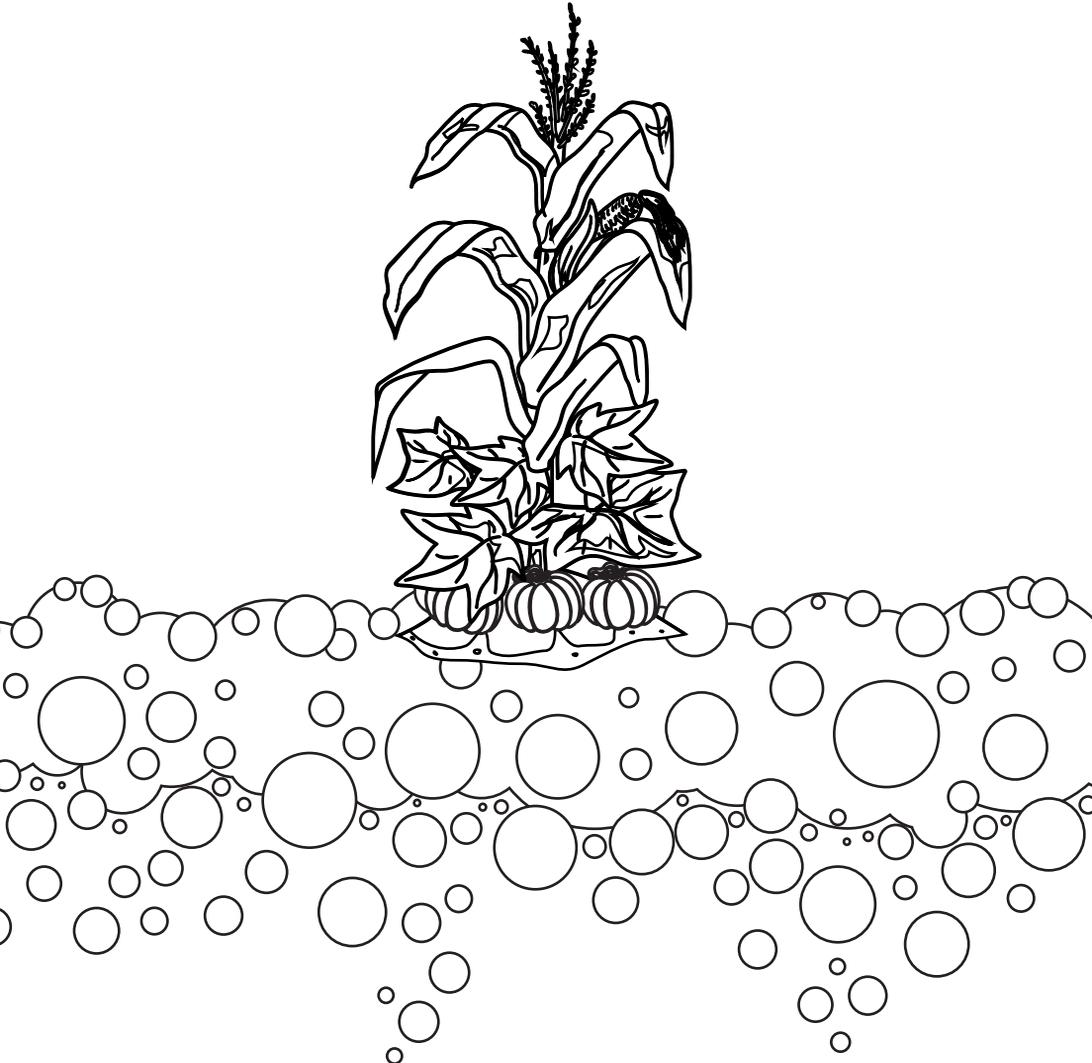
The third was the eldest sister, standing always very straight and tall above the other sisters and trying to protect them. She wore a pale green shawl, and she had long, yellow hair that tossed about her head in the breeze.



There was one way the sisters were all alike, though. They loved each other dearly, and they always stayed together. This made them very strong.

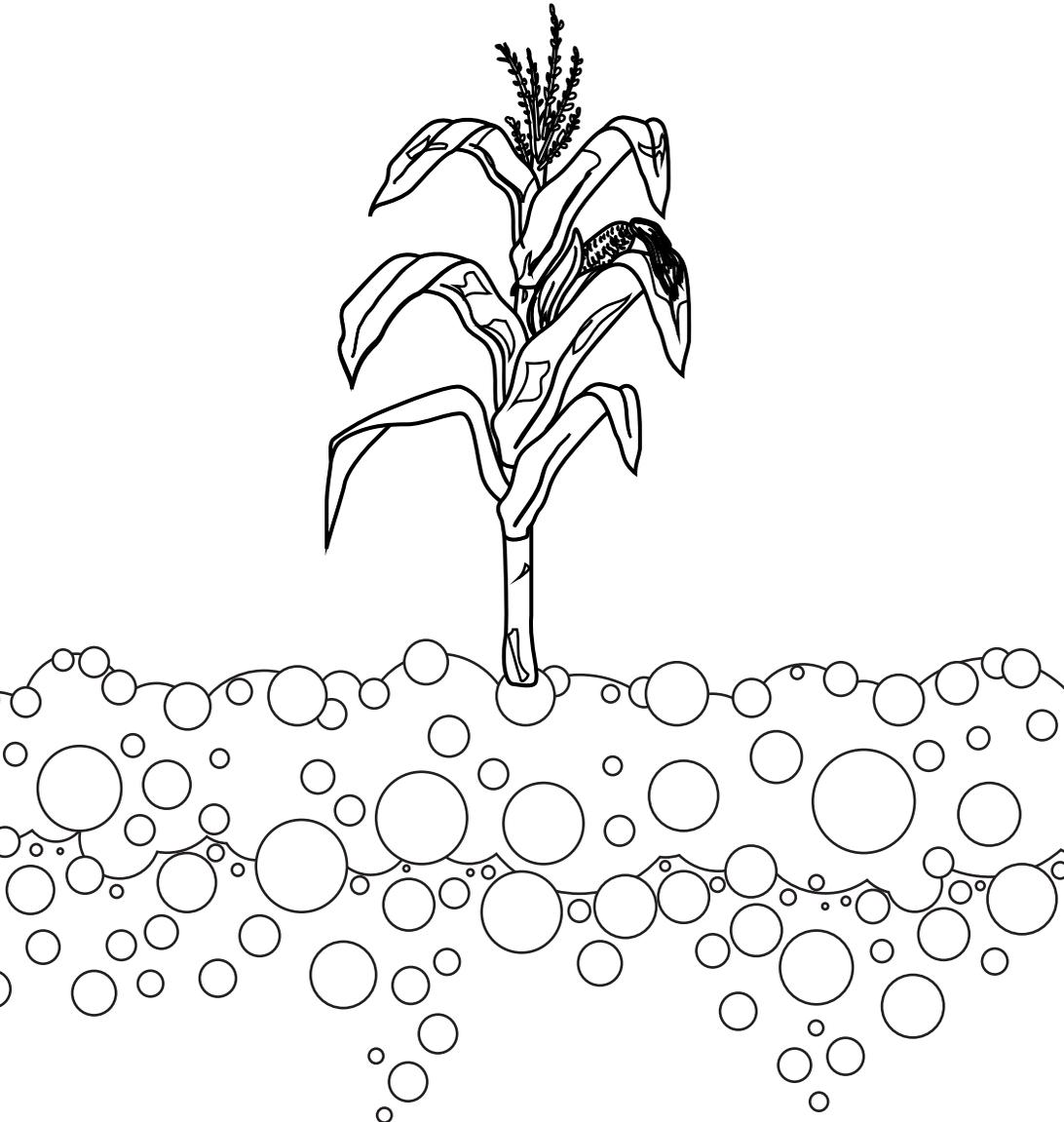
One day a stranger came to the field of the Three Sisters - a Mohawk boy. He talked to the birds and other animals - this caught the attention of the three sisters.

Late that summer, the youngest and smallest sister disappeared. Her sisters were sad.



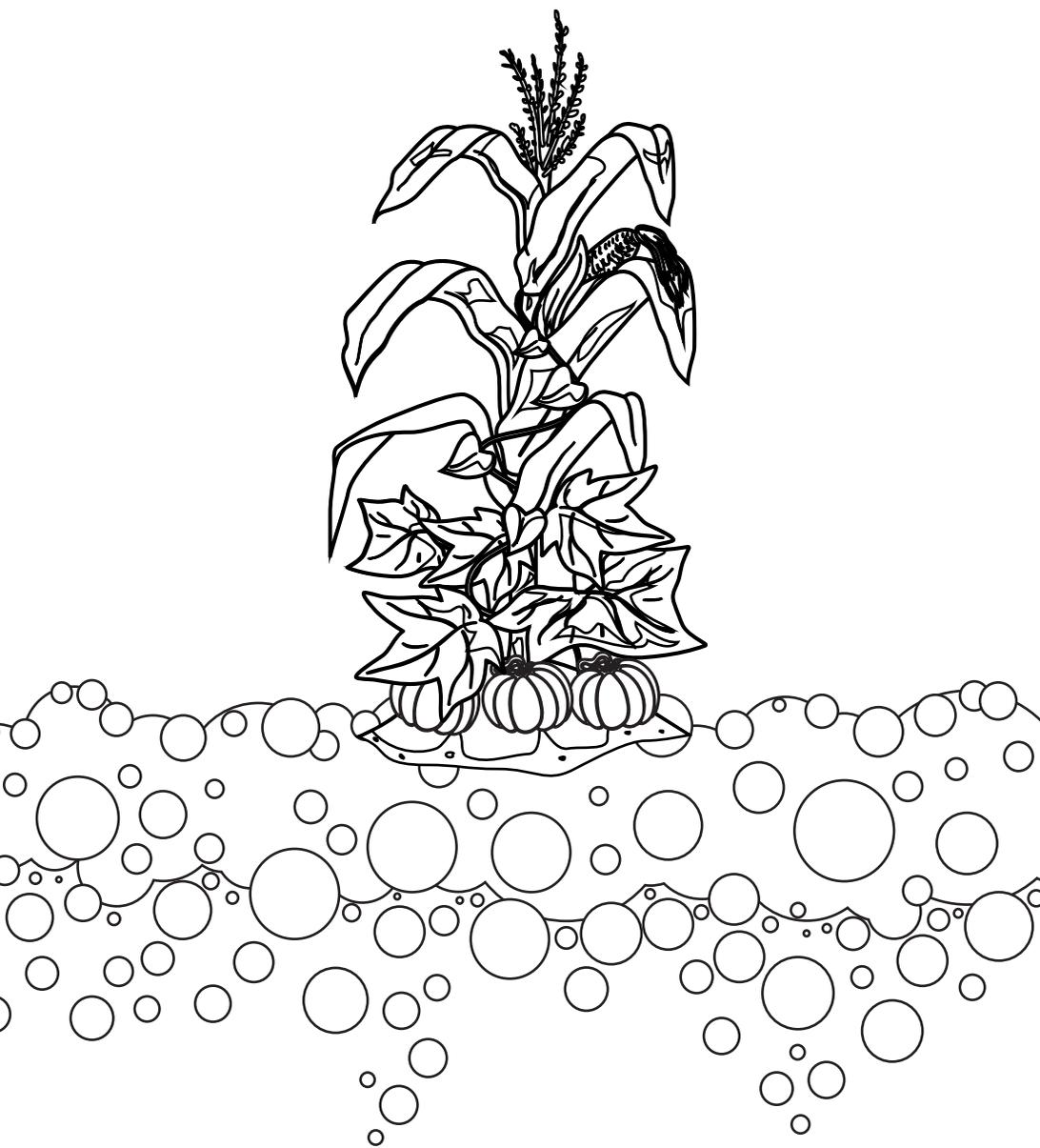
Which sister crop disappeared? _____

Again the Mohawk boy came to the field to gather reeds at the water's edge. The two sisters who were left watched his moccasin trail, and that night the second sister - the one in the yellow dress - disappeared as well.
Now the Elder Sister was the only one left.



Which sister crop disappeared? _____

She continued to stand tall in her field. When the Mohawk boy saw that she missed her sisters, he brought them all back together and they became stronger together, again.



Draw a picture below of each the seeds growing in your glove on Day 7.

The three sisters are Corn, Beans, and Squash. They are seen as the three beautiful sisters because they grow in the same mound in the garden. The Corn provides a ladder for the Bean Vine. They together give shade to the Squash. The Cherokee till the mound three times.

This story enclosed is taken from an oral account by Lois Thomas of Cornwall Island, compiled by students at Centennial College and found in "Indian Legends of Eastern Canada."

Source: <http://www.birdclan.org/threesisters.htm> retrieved August 14, 2014,
Adopted from *Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom*