



*Women braiding corn for drying in Maxidiwac's (Buffalo Bird Woman) garden, 1909. Photograph by Gilbert Wilson*

People of the Three Affiliated Tribes belonged to their abundant farm lands. Dark and nutrient rich soil and access to plenty of water allowed Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara farmers to successfully raise corn, beans, sunflowers, tobacco, pumpkins, and squash. Their fields were cultivated using rakes made from deer antlers and hoes made of bison or elk shoulder bones. Gardeners sang special songs, such as “The Corn is My Pleasure,” and completed other cultural protocols to encourage the growth and health of their crops. Boys had the job of keeping birds away from the precious foods and seeds. Surplus crops were stored in underground pits so they could be used later or traded to other tribes.

