

## **“Trail of Tears Corn”**

**Time: 1838**

**Location: North Georgia Mountains**

The stockade provided little protection from the freezing rain and winds as the families huddled closely together trying to keep their children warm. Many people had no shoes or blankets. There were no houses for shelter and the food rations were almost depleted.

Soon the resumption of the forced march to the Oklahoma Territories would begin.

The Trail of Tears was underway. Within a short span of time, at least 4,000 Cherokee will have perished, most of those that would be lost were women, children and the elderly.

**Time: 2002**

**Location: Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center, Americus Georgia.**

Some of the corn seed that was originally carried on the Trail of Tears has survived and produced a small amount of crops for the last 163 years.

The USDA-NRCS Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center is developing the Trail of Tears Corn seed stock. This is an attempt to help reintroduce this very rare and special crop to the descendants of the Cherokee People that once covered the North Georgia Mountains.

The corn is being grown in a protected and irrigated area in order to produce viable seed stock for future use. This will provide tribal members and others the opportunity to feed their families with this very special corn.

The Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee, Cherokee Heritage Foundation, Chestatee-Chatahoochee RC&D, Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe, Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission, Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center, and Underwood Gardens have been instrumental partners since the inception of this project.

This project owes much gratitude to Mayo Underwood, of Underwood Gardens. Without her infinite knowledge of heirloom plant varieties and the connection that she shares with Mother Earth, none as this would have been possible. The original seed stock that she provided will be grown and cherished for many years to come.

Plans are to grow this sacred corn in a respectful manner and great lengths have been taken to insure that the seed stock will remain pure.

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