

America helping to grow Sweetgrass for the Haudenosaunee(Iroquois)

Sweetgrass is important to the Haudenosaunee(Iroquois) nations. For a very long time it's been used for Basketweaving Smudging medicine, and food for these people. In the 1700s, after the whites had come to North America, the Haudenosaunee(Iroquois) tribes were forced to move from their original location in the Mohawk Valley area. Their new places did not particularly support sweetgrass and the important plant is not as popular lost in modern Iroquois culture today as a consequence.

In 1993, Kanatsiohareke, a 130 acre land with forest and farming fields was established along the Mohawk river in eastern New York to heal Haudenosaunee cultural roots when they were forced to move by the whites. Sweetgrass doesn't grow that much in this new area. Recently, though, the government and a New York university funded research to see if the plant could grow in the new area and heal the relationship that the Haudenosaunee used to have with Sweetgrass. The study tested the species reaction to the environment, and also its reaction to being grown with other species.

The results of the research suggested that the species was not a great competitor when planted with other species. But when the plant was planted with Hairy Vetch, it made the Sweetgrass that was planted with it longer/higher, and easier to pick. This is good for the Haudenosaunee, and the community at Kanatsiohareke because longer Sweetgrass strands are good for baskets, and the baskets could be a way for them to make more money and do more of the things that they used to do before the whites moved them from their land.

This is a good example, because a government and a school is helping the Haudenosaunee be able to do the things that they used to do before the government and schools got a lot of power in North America. Hopefully they can do more things like this to help native American cultures that were hurt when the whites came and made themselves powerful because they didn't deserve that and they have a lot of knowledge that can be very powerful in the world today, that not a lot of people know about today.