

Efforts by Native Americans and Partners to Reclaim the Four Corners Potato

“Indigenous farmers of Pueblo and Diné journeyed to Red Butte Gardens on multiple occasions over the course of 2019 to exchange information on the culture, biology, archaeology and cultivation of the Four Corners Potato. By combining traditional and western approaches, the farmers enthusiastically spoke of returning this potato to the people of the region, with cultural, spiritual, health and economic benefits. We discussed problems with existing methods of cultivation, explored new technologies and came to appreciate the full potential of this native species.”


SOURCE: The Four Corners Potato Gazette Issues #1-#3



The Indigenous Farmers

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Pueblo
and
Diné

A photograph showing three individuals—two men and one woman—leaning over a wooden garden bed. They are focused on working with the soil, possibly planting or tending to a crop. The man on the left is wearing a grey hoodie and a dark cap. The woman in the middle has long dark hair and is wearing a camouflage jacket. The man on the right is wearing a dark t-shirt, blue jeans, and a dark cap with white speckles. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with dry grass and a fence.

The farmers worked with Red Butte Garden horticulturist Bruce Pavlik to conduct several experiments in an effort to learn how best to grow this ancestral potato.



Experimental troughs for cultivating Four Corners Potato on a large scale at **Red Butte Gardens**.
Photo by NHMU/BJ Nicholls.





ABOVE: The flower and foliage of the Four Corners potato (*Solanum jamesii*). Photo by Lisbeth Louderback. **RIGHT:** The Four Corners potato (*Solanum jamesii*) growing in one of the experimental troughs.





Harvesting the Four Corners Potato



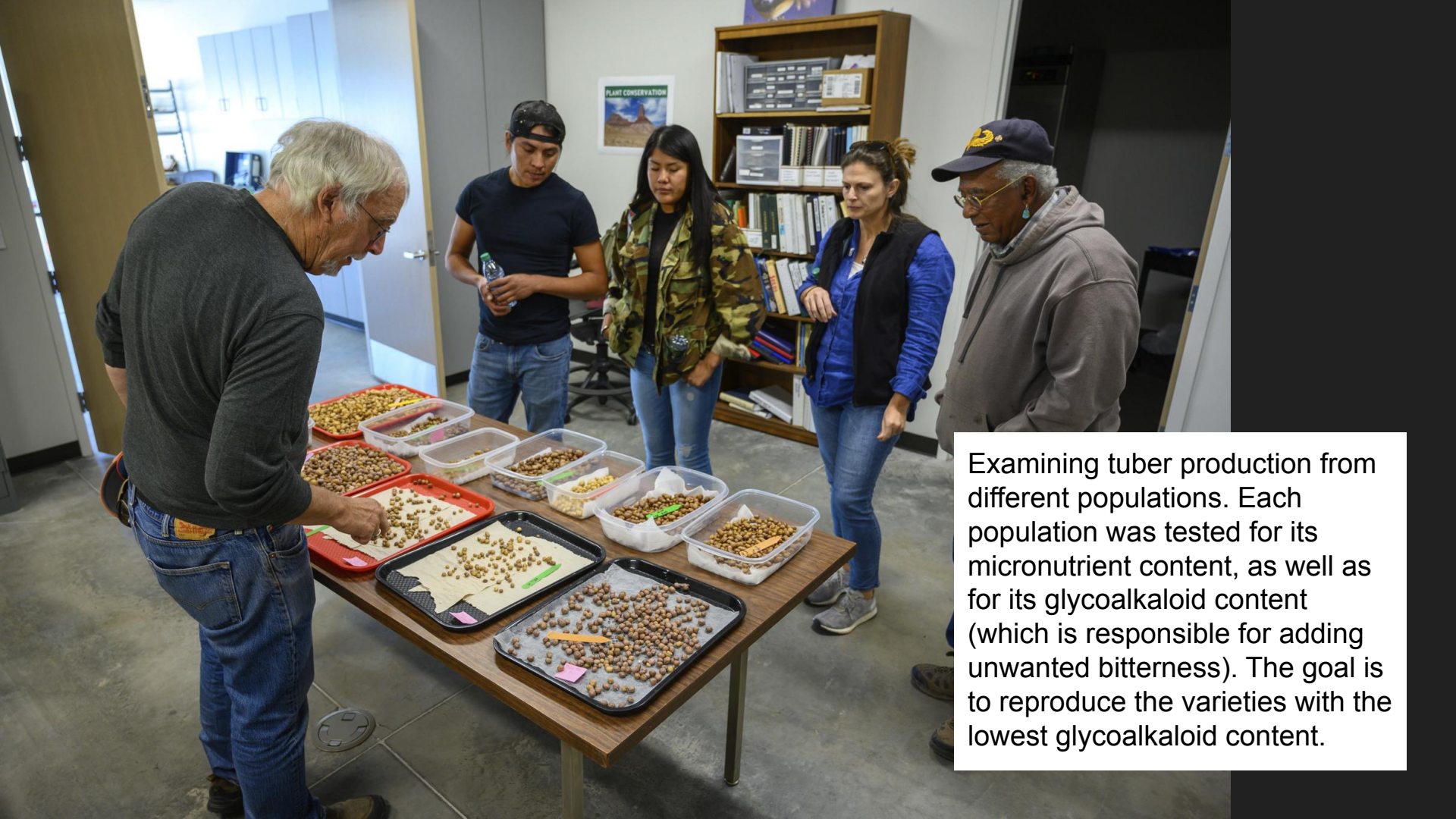
Several different harvest techniques were tested in order to determine the best technique for this particular food resource.











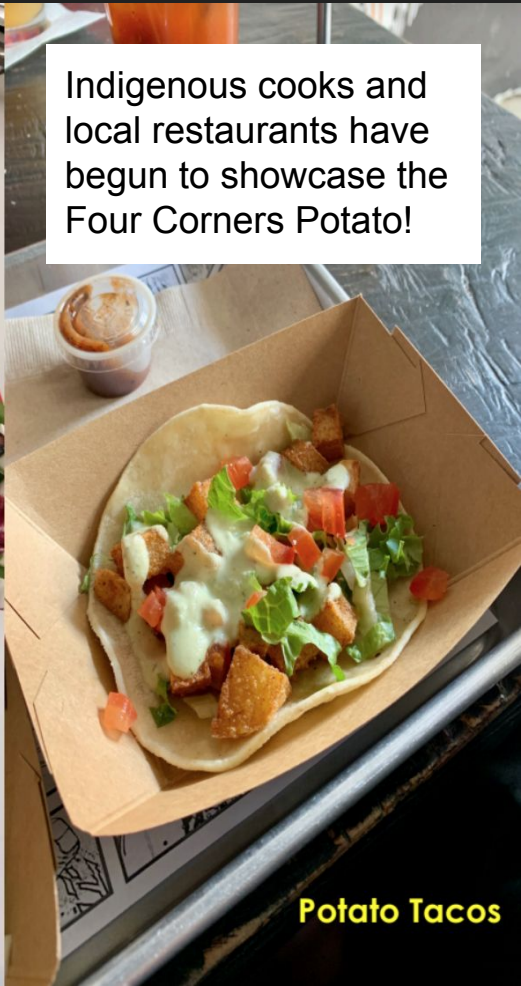
Examining tuber production from different populations. Each population was tested for its micronutrient content, as well as for its glycoalkaloid content (which is responsible for adding unwanted bitterness). The goal is to reproduce the varieties with the lowest glycoalkaloid content.



River trout with pinion crème and Four Corners Potato, served in corn husk. Created by **Chef Karlos Baca** for the **Traditional Foods Dinner**, November 2018, at the Natural History Museum of Utah.



Four Corners Salad
Chef Frances Stappen



Indigenous cooks and local restaurants have begun to showcase the Four Corners Potato!

Potato Tacos

The Four Corners Potato in 2021

In May of 2021, a new group of indigenous farmers met in Bluff, Utah, to attend a Four Corners Potato workshop with the goal of passing the knowledge gained from recent experimentation and research onto even more indigenous community members. Each farmer was given a small bag of tubers to take home and begin growing their own Four Corners Potatoes. While much has been learned about how to best grow this potato, there is still much more to learn. The hope is that these farmers will share their findings with the larger indigenous community so that everyone may benefit from this potato.

SOURCE: The Four Corners Potato Gazette Issues #1-#3