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TECHNICAL COLLEGE
LAND GRANT EXTENSION

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The Bean Woman (Tutelo-southeast)

Long ago, the animal people and the plant people lived together in a village beside the river. One morning, just as the sun was rising, all the men of that village heard the sound of a woman's voice singing downstream from the village. It was Bean Woman and this is what she sang:

Who will marry me?
Who will marry me?
Let him ask if he
Wants to Marry me.

Her voice was very beautiful. Many of the men in the village followed the sound of her voice to the place where Bean Woman sat by the river singing.

The first to reach her, for he was a very fast runner, was Mountain Lion Man.

"I will marry you," Mountain Lion Man said. "Will you accept me as your husband?" Bean Woman stopped singing and looked at Mountain Lion Man who crouched there in front of her, swinging his long tail from side to side. "If I marry you," she said, "what food will I have from you to eat".

I am a great hunter. You will always have plenty of meat, Mountain Lion Man said.

"Then if I married you I would die for I never eat that kind of food," Bean Woman answered.

So Mountain Lion Man went away.

The next to arrive was Deer Man.

"I will marry you," Deer Man said, "If you will accept me as your husband."

Again Bean Woman stopped signing. She looked at Deer Man, who stood there stomping his feet, his broad antlers raised high. "What food will you give me to eat?" Bean Woman said.

"I will give you the tender bark of trees and sweet buds," Deer Man said. "That is what I eat and what you would eat as my wife."

"Then I cannot marry you," Bean Woman said. "I have never eaten such food and I would die."

Deer Man went sadly away. As soon as he left, Bean Woman began again to sing her song.

Who will marry me?
Who will marry me?
Let him ask if he
wants to marry me.

But as she was singing, she sensed the presence of someone who had appeared as quietly as if he had come up out of the moist earth. She stopped singing and looked up.

Corn Man stood there close beside her, tall and straight, his golden hair blowing in the wind.

"I will marry you if you will accept me," Corn Man said in a soft voice.

"What food will give me as your wife?" she said.

"Only sweet corn," Corn Man said. "I will give you that and no other food."

"If that is so, I will gladly marry you."

"It is so," Corn Man said, opening his arms. "Come to me and be my wife."

Then Bean Woman rushed forward and threw her arms around Corn Man's neck.

"This is how it was meant to be," Bean Woman said as she embraced Corn Man. "The Great Creator made us to always be with each other."

So it is that to this day, whenever you walk into the fields which are planted in the old Tuteto way, you will see the bean plants twined around the corn in a loving embrace.

From the book: Native American Gardening: Stories, Projects and recopies for Families. By Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, Fulcrum Publishing, Golden Colorado, Copyright 1996

