Cornbread Connections

We make Haudenosaunee cornbread from White Corn. That’s how our ancestors did it. We make it the same way.

There is something to do in each season of the year. Corn is not “wild.” We must plant it and cultivate it. We must harvest it, dry it, and store it.

First we gather plants we call medicines. Then we soak the corn seed in water with the medicines. Soaking the corn seed with the medicines protects the corn seed. They keep insects away. We sing seed songs while we plant. We sing them to express thankfulness and ask for a good crop. After harvesting, we pull back the husks from the corn. We braid them together. Then we hang the corn up to dry for several months.

We use tools to prepare and cook the corn. Our ancestors made the tools themselves. We could too. We could make clay pots for cooking corn in. First we would need to gather clay. For firing pots, we would need to burn wood. We would need to know which trees to burn.

We could then save the ashes. Boiling corn with ashes makes the corn easier to grind. It also makes corn more nutritious. After boiling the corn with ashes, we need to strain it and rinse it. For that we can use a corn-washing basket. We could make the basket, too.

After washing the corn, we need to pound it to make the flour. For that, we could make a corn pounder. After making the flour, we add boiling water to form the wheels of cornbread. Then we add them to boiling water. We use a wooden paddle. We could make the paddle too.

All of this goes into eating one meal of cornbread!