

# Green Corn Ceremony

## by Chief Talks With Trees

The Green Corn Ceremony is a special social and spiritual event that is held by many native peoples, primarily those in the southern and woodland states, such as Seminole and Muscogee Creek. However, most Native Americans have a similar event within their cultures, stemming from traditional expressions of gratitude to the Creator for providing food, and it is generally associated with the annual maize harvest. Indigenous peoples used this time for religious, social, and organizational purposes.

The Ceremony is marked with dancing, feasting, fasting and religious observations. A number of different ceremonies may be performed at this annual festival such as the Sweat Lodge or Peyote Ceremonies. It is considered by many traditions to be the New Year, and as such, all trespasses were to be forgiven and reconciled where possible.

For the sake of this training module, we will discuss the basics of a Green Corn Ceremony.

First, each participant will be ritually smudged by the Medicine Person, or assigned, designated to guide the Ceremony. Next, those in attendance will gather around the Sacred Fire Pit while the Medicine Person, or designee, gives thanks to the Giver of Breath for the blessings of food in abundance. Anyone who wishes to speak at this time will raise their hand and wait until called upon to speak. It is at this time that thanks, concerns, testimonies, requests for forgiveness, and prayers are given. When everyone has finished speaking, the Sacred Fire is kindled and is to remain lit until the Ceremony is concluded, usually two nights. At this time there should be a feast and after the meal a fast begins.

The following morning there will be a ritual "Stomp Dancing" around the Sacred Fire to start the day. This dancing is similar to the Sun Dance or Ghost Dance, and should be done until each participant is exhausted. There also may be a Sweat Lodge Ceremony for those who do not wish to dance, or dancers who first wish to do the purification ceremony. Participants may also desire to wash themselves ritually in a fresh water source such as a creek or lake. This day should be spent communing with the Creator and in deep contemplation of the purpose of the participant's life mission.

During the evening the participants will again gather around the Sacred Fire and the Medicine Person, or assigned, designated to guide the Ceremony will again speak offering wisdom as directed by the Spirit. At this time for all those who wish to attend, there may be the Peyote Ceremony or other ceremony as directed by the Spirit. The Green Corn Ceremony will conclude at sunrise with a prayer from the Medicine Person, or designee, and with another feast with the special emphasis on thanksgiving, unity, and new beginnings.

\*To gain a Certificate of Training for this Ceremony, a Medicine Person should feel called by the Spirit to lead the Ceremony. They also have to participate in three Green Corn Ceremonies and lead out, under the direction of the Certified Medicine Person in charge, at least one Green Corn Ceremony. Upon the successful Completion of the above, the Certified Medicine Person will write a letter of recommendation to the main office of the Church stating the trainee has accomplished the assigned tasks and they feel confident the trainee is qualified to be certified in this training.