

1780 PEQUOT FARMSTEAD GUIDE

Step outside and enter the grounds of a typical Pequot farmstead, circa 1780. The farmstead is about two acres in size and includes a vegetable garden, an herb garden, an orchard, a root cellar, and a small outbuilding that may have been an animal pen. Surrounding the property are wild plants, shrubs, and trees that provided this Pequot family with food and useful materials.

The tour is self-guided. Just follow the paths, and look for the numbered markers listed in the brochure. You will also find descriptive panels along the way. We hope you enjoy your visit.

Please Respect The Farmstead

For your safety, please stay on the paths that lead throughout the farmstead. All of the points of interest are accessible from the paths.

Please do not touch the plants, shrubs, or trees, or pick any part of them. Nuts and other plant products that may be on the ground should be left there.

So that others may enjoy their visit, please do not run or shout.



PLEASE RESPECT THE FARMSTEAD

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MASHANTUCKET
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KEY TO NUMBERED MARKERS ALONG FOOT PATH:

01 Herb Garden

Small gardens were typically planted by Native peoples outside their homes. These gardens included a mix of both native plants and introduced plants from Europe. These plants were used both for medicinal purposes and for cooking.

02 Midden

Middens are piles of discarded household waste that accumulate outside the house. This type of “garbage dump” is found at many historic archaeological sites on the reservation. This refuse generally consists of animal and plant remains, fireplace ash, broken ceramics, glass, and various metal objects.

03 Lamb's Quarters

In the spring and early summer, the leaves of this plant were boiled and eaten like spinach. This plant is commonly found in disturbed areas like agricultural fields and middens.

04 Milkweed, Indian Hemp, and Dogbane

The fibers found in the stems of these plants were twisted into twine or cordage and used for making bags and nets.

05 Blackberry, Raspberry, and Strawberry

These berry plants are found in and along the edges of fields. The strawberries are ripe by early summer and the blackberries and raspberries by mid-summer. They were eaten fresh or made into preserves.

06 Shagbark Hickory, Black Walnut & American Beech

These trees produce abundant quantities of mast (nuts). Unlike the fruits of other nut-bearing trees, these nuts do not need to be boiled to remove the bitter taste. These could be eaten raw, boiled and made into meal or mush for stews, or dried for later use. The inner bark of shagbark hickory was used to make a yellow dye and the husks of the black walnut were used to make a dark brown or black dye.

07 Horticulture Plot

This garden demonstrates both traditional cultivation techniques (the combination of corn, beans, and squash in hills) as well as the incorporation of new planting styles (planting in rows) and new cultivated plants such as turnip, parsnip, and beets.

08 Lowbush Blueberry and Highbush Blueberry

These are common forest shrubs that produce masses of berries beginning in mid-summer. Pequot children were often sent out with berry picking baskets to collect these fruits which were eaten fresh, used for baking, or dried and preserved for later use. The fruits could also be crushed and used to make dye.

09 White Pine

This tree can be found in swamps and abandoned fields. Fresh pine needles were steeped and used to make a tea to treat colds and an infusion of the inner bark was used as a cough remedy. The pitch was sometimes chewed like gum and was also used as a waterproofing material.

10 White Oak

The wood was used for framing and flooring in house construction, for tool handles, and to make woodsplint baskets. The acorns were boiled and crushed to make meal or mush for stews or for baking. Acorns were also good food for foraging swine and wildlife such as deer and turkey.

11 Fleshy Hawthorn

This small tree can be found in the understory of wooded areas. It has fleshy fruits that can be eaten fresh. The hawthorn seeds have been found at several archaeological sites on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation.

12 Root Cellar

This type of structure has been identified at several abandoned Pequot Farmsteads on the reservation. The stone foundation was covered with logs and earth creating a cool underground chamber even during the hot summer months. This “refrigerator” was used for storing a variety of foods to reduce spoilage. Many root and tuberous plants could be kept here including groundnut, turnip, and Jerusalem artichoke.

13 Groundnut

This vine is a common plant that grows in fields and along trails. The swollen underground tuber was boiled or roasted and eaten like a potato.

14 Old Field

The plants that grow here thrive in disturbed or open field habitats. Here you can see plantain, mullein, cow-vetch, dandelion, clover, and many more.

15 Sugar Maple

The inner bark of this forest tree was used for making a cough remedy. Sugar maple wood was carved into spoons, ladles, bowls, and stirring paddles. The sap of the tree was used as a sweetening agent and for making maple syrup.

16 White Ash and Black Ash

The wood of the black ash was pounded and cut into splints for making baskets and caning seats. White ash wood was formed to make snowshoe frames and tool handles. The young tree or branch was also pounded and the splints were cut, peeled back, and tied to make brooms.

17 American Hazelnut

The nuts of this common forest shrub mature in late summer and were eaten raw or stored for later consumption.

18 Peach

The peach tree originated in Asia and was introduced to Native people by Europeans in the 17th century. The carbonized remains of peach pits have been identified at several historic period archaeological sites on the reservation. Peaches were eaten fresh, dried, made into preserves, or fermented to make brandy.

19 Apple

European colonists also introduced apple trees to Native peoples in the 17th century. The Pequots maintained extensive apple orchards during this historical period. The fruits were eaten fresh, used for baking, and to make cider.

20 Stone Animal Pen

This type of structure can also be found at several historic sites on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation. It served as a pen for domestic animals such as cows, pigs, goats, or sheep.