

Hubbell Trading Post

National Historic Site
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Plants at Hubbell Trading Post



When John Lorenzo Hubbell came to Ganado in 1878, he started the Hubbell Trading Post. To some, the land looked empty and barren, but to the Navajo (Diné) the mesas were full of useful plants.

The plants that were here when Mr. Hubbell arrived were mostly shrubs and grasses. Rabbit brush, sage brush, and yuccas were just a few of those. Trees were growing in the canyons and on the mesas, but they did not grow at the trading

post until people planted them here.

Mr. Hubbell had many cows, horses, and burrows at his trading post. To feed them, he grew large crops of alfalfa. You might know it better as "hay".

Mr. Hubbell had other gardens as well. Vegetable gardens provided corn, potatoes, pumpkins, and squash. Fruit gardens provided melons, apricots, rhubarb, and even grapes!

Below, you will see a list of several plants. They grew in the Ganado area from the 1870's to the 1950's. All of the native plants can still be found here.

Some of the flowers are still growing wild in the yard.

Although corn is the only planted crop here at this time, the National Park Service is making plans to sow gardens at the trading post like the ones Mr. Hubbell had when he lived here.

NATIVE PLANTS

These are some of the native plants. The Navajo have always had many uses for the trees, shrubs, and grasses.

T'is bit'aa' niteelgíí Cottonwood tree

- Ceremonial figurines are carved from the wood.
- The wood can be made into cradleboards for babies.
- The limbs of the tree can be made into garden tools.
- Weavers use looms that are made from the wood.
- It is also used for firewood.

K'iiltsoí nitsaaígíí Rabbit brush

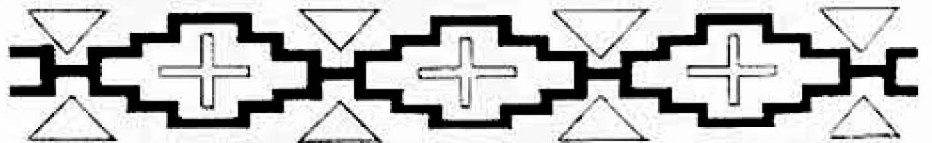
- A sunny yellow dye is made from the flowers.
- The greens are eaten in stews.
- The Navajo use rabbit brush in certain ceremonies.
- It can help relieve coughs and colds.

Chá'ol Pinyon pine tree

- It is made into a talcum powder for babies.
- An ointment can be made for skin rashes.
- Pinyon is used in certain Navajo ceremonies.
- The "pitch" is a sticky sap-like substance. It is used for making water baskets and pots waterproof. It can also be placed on wounds to draw out infection.
- The wood can be used for building fences and hogans. (Hogans are round Navajo homes.)
- The tiny pinyon nut is a delicious and healthy treat!

Gad Juniper shrub

- It is used to cure headaches, stomachaches, spider bites, and more.
- Certain Navajo ceremonies require the use of juniper.
- Many buildings are constructed from the wood. So are fences.
- The needles are used for medicine tea and can be heated in bundles and used as a heat pack.
- The bark makes a nice dye for yarn.
- Ghost beads are made from the berries.
- Old, dark sap is used for chewing.



Tsá'ászi'ts'óóz

Yucca (soapweed or narrow yucca)

- Some use the roots for ceremonial cleansing.
- The roots can be ground and mixed with water. Then, they make a rich lather to wash people, hair, and wool.
- The leaves can be used to weave baskets and sandals.
- Juice from the plant is used to make ceremonial paint.
- The fruit tastes like dates and is eaten when in season.
- The leaves can also be made into a paintbrush or used as a sewing needle.



Ts'ah

Sage brush

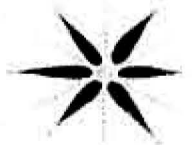
- This is used for a "life medicine".
- A tea made from the ts'ah plant will cure colds and coughs.
- It is used in certain ceremonies.
- Dyes made from the plant include colors of yellow, gold, and green.
- Some people believe that if sage brush is planted next to corn, rain will fall.

Here is a list of fruits (tsin bineest'a') that Mr. Hubbell grew at his Trading Post.



English	Navajo
apricots.....	didzétsoh yázhí
bananamelons.....	ta'neesk'áni hashk'aan
cantaloupes.....	ta'neesk'áni
grapes.....	ch'il na'at'l'o'ii
mulberries.....	○
rhubarb.....	○
watermelon.....	ch'ééhjiyaán

Here are the grains (Neeshch'íí') and (dóó) nuts (Bináá') that were farmed at the trading post.



English	Navajo
alfalfa.....	l'ó
beans.....	naa'oli
oats.....	l'oh nanool'oh
peanuts.....	neeshch'íilbáhi
rye.....	○
walnuts.....	ha'altsédii

These are two types of trees (T'íis) that were raised at Hubbell Trading Post.

English	Navajo
elm trees.....	l'íis bididze lichí'igii
poplar trees.....	tsin dit'ódii

This list shows a few of the many flowers (ch'il látah hózhóón) and vines (ch'il na'at'l'o'ii) that grew here. Look to see if they still do!

English	Navajo
calendulas.....	○
dahlia.....	○
honey suckle.....	○
lilac bushes.....	○
nasturiums.....	○
silverface vines.....	○
virginia creeper.....	○
yellow roses.....	chooh litso
wild pink roses.....	chooh dinilchí'
wood vine.....	○

This list shows some of the vegetables (Ch'il Daadánígíí) that Mr. Hubbell grew in his gardens.

English	Navajo
cabbage/kale/lettuce.....	ch'il ligaii
corn.....	naadaá'
green beans.....	naa'ohi doot'izhi
olives.....	○
onions.....	l'ohchin
potatoes.....	nimasii
pumpkins.....	naayizilchí'í
spinach.....	waa'
squash.....	naayizi
sweet potatoes.....	nahooyei
tomatoes.....	ch'il lichí'í



A "○" means that a specific Navajo name has not been found.