



Juneteenth & Plants

The role of plants in African American history
and the fight to freedom.

June 19th, 1865 marks the end of slavery in
the U.S. Two years following the
Emancipation Proclamation, the last
enslaved black people finally learned that
they were free in Galveston, Texas.

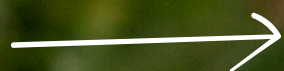




Marigolds

Marigold are considered to be deeply connected to the sun, ancestral protection, and celebration. They are believed to bridge the spiritual and the physical worlds, honoring those who came before and protecting those alive today.

-Sunnyside Gardens





Black-Eyed Susan

According to folklore, Black-eyed Susan flowers marked safe houses along the Underground Railroad. The bloom became a symbol of refuge, resistance, and hope.



Hibiscus

Hibiscus were brought over to the U.S during the slave trade. In African healing and spiritual practices it has been used for medicinal and healing properties.

It became a symbol of survival and represented the continuation of these traditional cultural practices despite oppression.





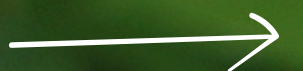
Okra

Okra was brought from West Africa on slave ships, sometimes it was hidden in their hair for safe-keeping. It was heavily valued because it was easy to grow and nutritious.



Sassafrass

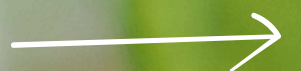
The leaves and buds were eaten by self-liberated slaves while fleeing to freedom.





Pawpaw

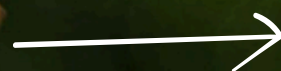
The Pawpaw tree produces large delicious fruit that also fed self-liberated slaves as they fled for freedom. They were high in protein, fat, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.





Sweetgum

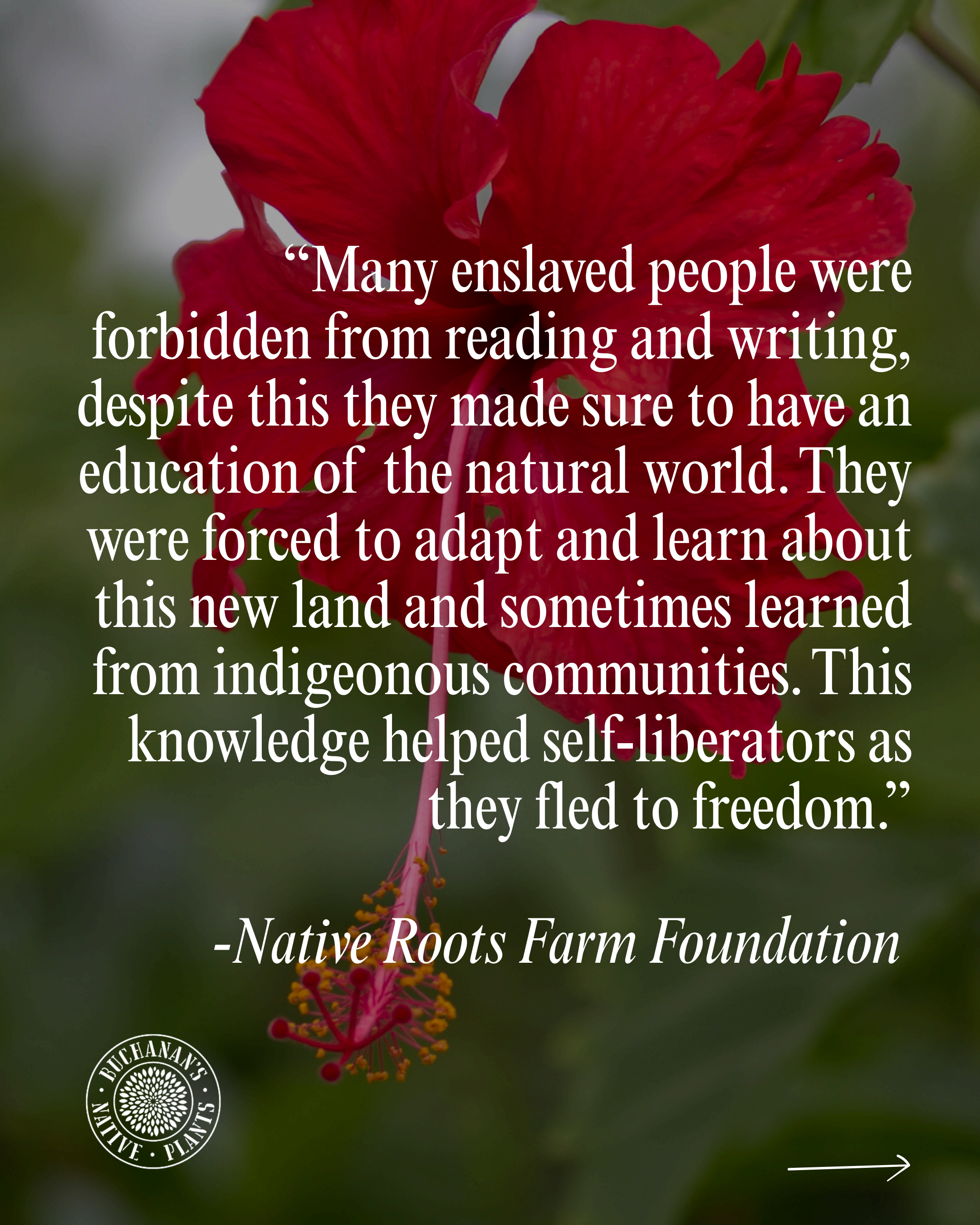
The leaves and resin from Sweetgum trees was used by Harriet Tubman to treat infections.



Other Valuable Plants During the Pursuit to Freedom

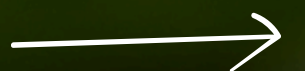
Corn, Potatoes, Sweet
Potatoes, Pine Roots,
Cucumbers, Beans, and
Amaranth.



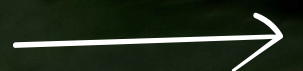


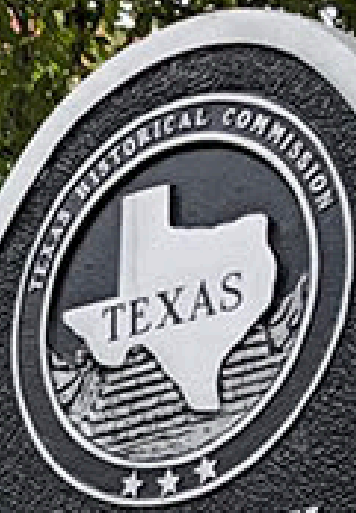
“Many enslaved people were forbidden from reading and writing, despite this they made sure to have an education of the natural world. They were forced to adapt and learn about this new land and sometimes learned from indigeonous communities. This knowledge helped self-liberators as they fled to freedom.”

-Native Roots Farm Foundation



In 1979, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday. Several others followed suit over the years. Decades later, in June 2021, Congress passed a resolution establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday; President Joe Biden signed it into law on June 17, 2021.





JUNETEENTH

COMMEMORATED ANNUALLY ON JUNE 19TH, JUNETEENTH IS THE OLDEST KNOWN CELEBRATION OF THE END OF SLAVERY IN THE U.S. THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION, ISSUED BY PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON SEP. 22, 1862, ANNOUNCED, "THAT ON THE 1ST DAY OF JANUARY, A.D. 1863, ALL PERSONS HELD AS SLAVES WITHIN ANY STATE...IN REBELLION AGAINST THE U.S. SHALL BE THEN, THENCEFORWARD AND FOREVER FREE." HOWEVER, IT WOULD TAKE THE CIVIL WAR AND PASSAGE OF THE 13TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO END THE BRUTAL INSTITUTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SLAVERY.

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR ENDED IN APRIL 1865 MOST SLAVES IN TEXAS WERE STILL UNAWARE OF THEIR FREEDOM. THIS BEGAN TO CHANGE WHEN UNION TROOPS ARRIVED IN GALVESTON. MAJ. GEN. GORDON GRANGER, COMMANDING OFFICER, DISTRICT OF TEXAS, FROM HIS HEADQUARTERS IN THE OSTERMAN BUILDING (STRAND AND 22ND ST.), READ 'GENERAL ORDER NO. 3' ON JUNE 19, 1865. THE ORDER STATED "THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS ARE INFORMED THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PROCLAMATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE OF THE UNITED STATES, ALL SLAVES ARE FREE. THIS INVOLVES AN ABSOLUTE EQUALITY OF PERSONAL RIGHTS AND RIGHTS OF PROPERTY BETWEEN FORMER MASTERS AND SLAVES." WITH THIS NOTICE, RECONSTRUCTION ERA TEXAS BEGAN.

FREED AFRICAN AMERICANS OBSERVED "EMANCIPATION DAY," AS IT WAS FIRST KNOWN, AS EARLY AS 1866 IN GALVESTON. AS COMMUNITY GATHERINGS GREW ACROSS TEXAS, CELEBRATIONS INCLUDED PARADES, PRAYER, SINGING, AND READINGS OF THE PROCLAMATION. IN THE MID-20TH CENTURY, COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS GAVE WAY TO MORE PRIVATE COMMEMORATIONS. A RE-EMERGENCE OF PUBLIC OBSERVANCE HELPED JUNETEENTH BECOME A STATE HOLIDAY IN 1979. INITIALLY OBSERVED IN TEXAS, THIS LANDMARK EVENT'S LEGACY IS EVIDENT TODAY BY WORLDWIDE COMMEMORATIONS THAT CELEBRATE FREEDOM AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

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