



# GHWIC Success Story

## Oglala Lakota Oyate Teca Project: Medicine Root Gardening Program

For its 2020-2021 Good Health & Wellness project titled Medicine Root Gardening Program, the Oglala Lakota's Oyate Teca Project aimed to promote health education and prevention activities for the Pine Ridge Reservation community.

Over nine months, 46 community participants in the Medicine Root Gardening Program learned a significant amount of information from a series of gardening classes, everything from when to plant seeds to how to safely preserve produce grown in your garden. The Oyate Teca Project hosted special guests to share knowledge during virtual gardening classes, including Billy Mills, an Olympic gold medalist and a National Geographic writer who spoke about the importance of bees and pollination. Past gardening class participants also joined to mentor and share their real life gardening experiences, like how to navigate through the impacts of hail storms and creative watering techniques.

Oyate Teca Project purchased two new high tunnels, temporary structures that extend the growing season. The tribe now has a total to four that they use in their gardening program.

Oyate Teca Project hosted a farmer's market where gardening class participants sold their produce over an 8 week period. All of this positive activity drew attention from both within and outside the reservation: Oyate Teca Project was interviewed by Civil Eats and the local TV station. 120 community members attended the farmer's market.

Looking ahead, the Oglala Lakota has many exciting opportunities for continued growth and the gardening classes have inspired staff to dream bigger. Oyate Teca Project recently broke ground on a new 21,000 square foot building. The new building will be used as a place where community members will be able to learn about and practice such skills as cooking healthy meals from scratch and canning. The building will include a commercial kitchen and a restaurant. In addition, Oyate Teca Project also just purchased a bus that they plan to turn into a grocery store on wheels, or a "mobile market", allowing the program to bring fresh produce to communities where access is limited.

*Story at a glance*

- Tribe:** Oglala Lakota
- Organization and project name:** Oyate Teca Project, Medicine Root Gardening Program
- Focus area:** Access to health foods and beverages
- Community:** Residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation
- Partners:** 17 Lakota Food
- Coalition members:** 3
- Reach:** 3,298

**"The food preservation program has been a great pandemic pass time. It has brought families together."**

- Program Staff

