

Historic Inhabitants

Looking at the People who came before us.

The History of San Antonio

Before H.E.B. and the Missions, people were living in the **San Antonio** region more than 12,000 years ago. Before industrialization, historic inhabitants of the area used sustainable ways of living. **Yanaguana** or "Land of the Spirit Waters" is the geographical area now known as Bexar County and San Antonio, named such for the natural springs feeding the San Antonio River.

Indigenous People & How they Lived

The Yanaguana village is the ancestral home of the **Payaya** people, a band belonging to the **Coahuiltecan** Nation, a collective of affiliated bands & clans that speak a variety of dialects and languages. The Coahuiltecan were hunter-gatherers and their villages were positioned near rivers and bodies of water. Even today, Coahuiltecan descendents and Indigenous communities make up to 2% of the San Antonio population.

Historic Evidence of Humans

Nomadic peoples moved around through the year and several archeological finds here in San Antonio have shown that permanent settlements occurred up to 8,800 years ago. These established areas, with more people in one spot, have left artifacts and physical history including spears, darts, arrowheads, bows, ceramics, and cemeteries. More importantly, the surviving peoples and cultures can teach us about this history.

Indigenous Ingenuity

Ranging across south Texas and northern Mexico, their travels were influenced by the seasons and availability of food. While bison & deer were main staples, this was supplemented by fish, birds, rabbit, lizards and snakes. Fruits, nuts, beans, roots, and seeds gathered were also important for diet. Most of these things we still eat today, but we get them from the grocery store! Many plants also had medicinal and utility uses, and this skill and knowledge are passed down through the generations.

How can we continue to steward the land?

By learning about the local history and native plants and wildlife, we can bring elements to our homes and gardens to support the life in the area. Native plants and water features, as well as teaching others what you learn, are the easiest ways to make an impact!



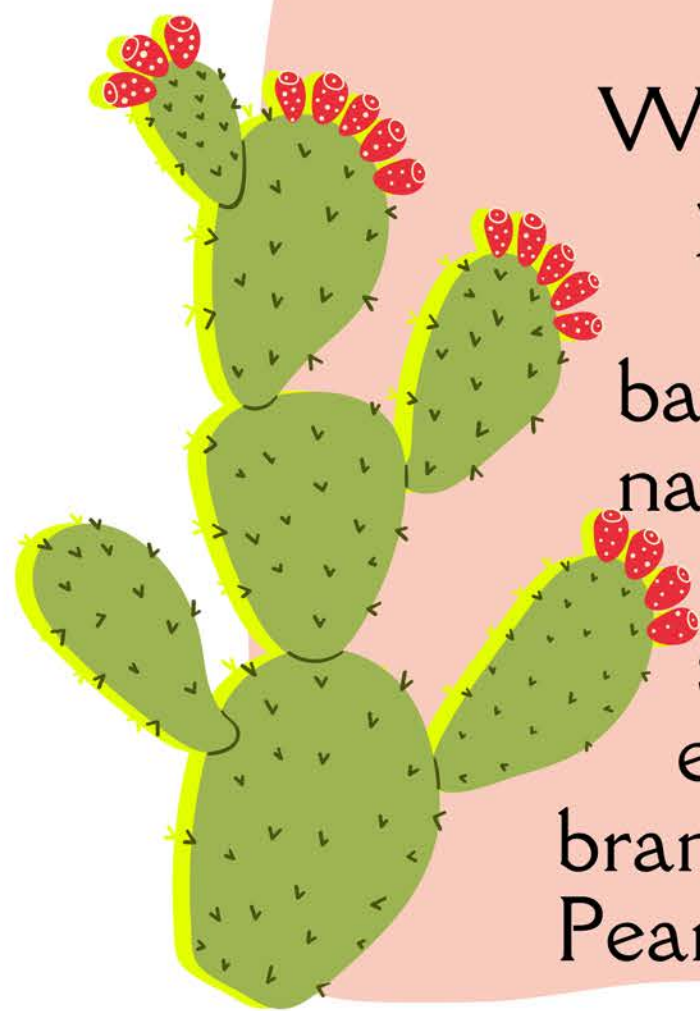
ETHNOBOTANY:

Ethnobotany is the study of how people from different cultures and times made use of plants. Ethnobotany can help us remember and honor the native wisdom that precedes many of our modern day products. We benefit from these thousands of years of knowledge.

Plants can be FOOD!

What are some plants you eat every day?

Wheat, corn, bananas? What about native plants? Here in the park you may see some plants with edible leaves, fruit or branches, like the Prickly Pear Cactus!



Plants can have UTILITY!

Don't think plants are only good for eating! Many of the most important uses of plants are utility. Grasses and fibers can be used to make baskets or fabric [ever wear cotton?]. Plants with long sturdy, flexible leaves were best at weaving. Try your hand at making a basket!



HOW DO YOU USE PLANTS EVERYDAY?

Plants can be MEDICINE!

Whether it's curing a headache or soothing an upset stomach, many medicines are the base for modern medicines!

Tea made from leaves of specific plants for specific ailments, like the willow tree helping with headaches, have been used for millennia by people around the world. Modern medicine has taken this knowledge and given us many medicines like Aspirin! Native plants used like this also include persimmon, dandelion, clover, and sage - to name a few!



Can you find one plant in the park for each of these 3 uses?

Be a DETECTIVE! Walk through the park to find plants and animals people may use for purposes besides food!

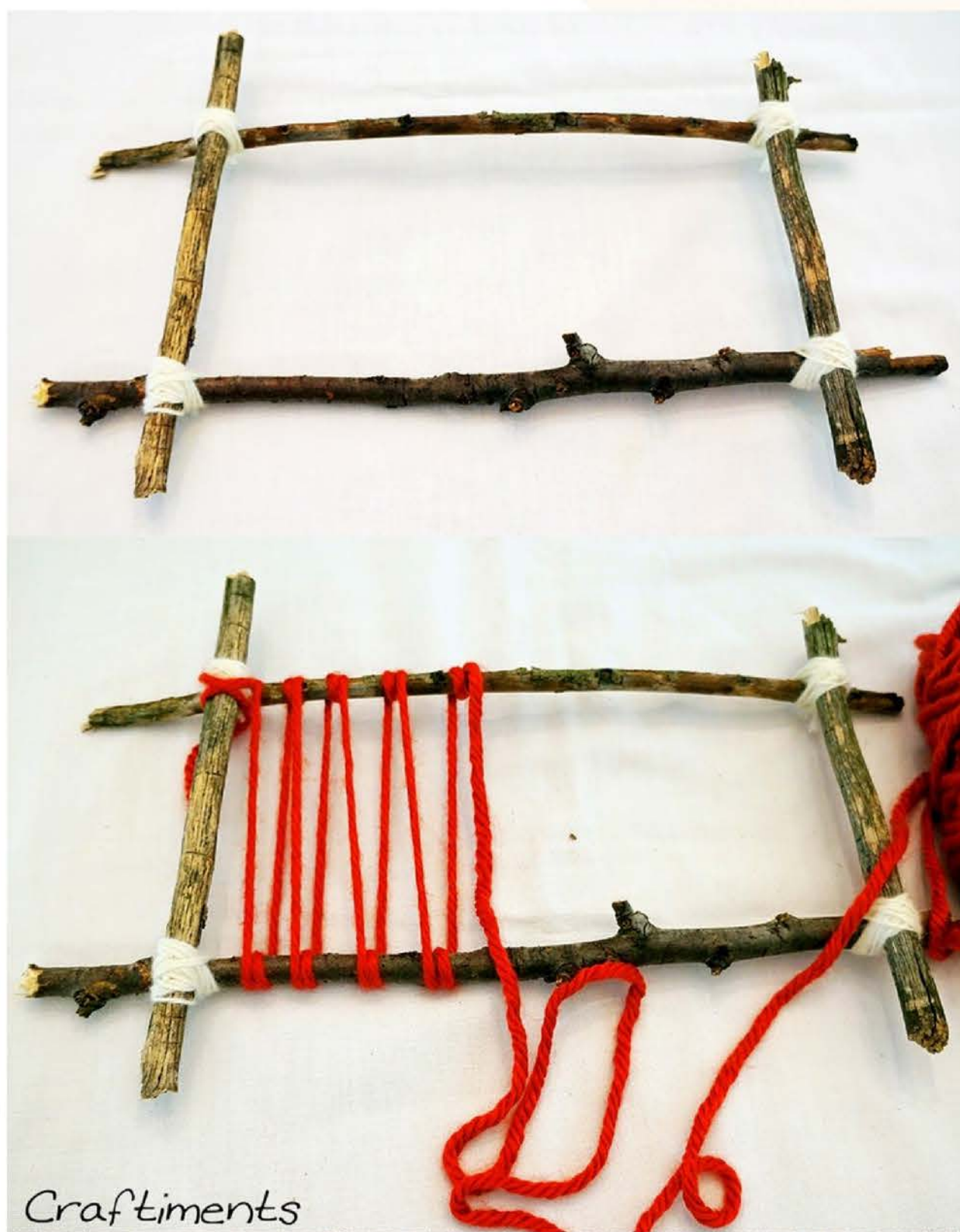


Grab-N-Go

Nature Lessons Kit

Nature Weaving Craft

MATERIALS: Found Sticks [3 or 4], Yarn, Leaves, Flowers, Twigs and Bark



DIRECTIONS: For this nature activity, gather three or four sticks, none longer than your forearm. Cross the corners of two sticks and wrap the yarn around and crisscrossing until they are securely tied. Repeat until all sticks are joined in a triangle or square.

Next, wrap a long piece of yarn tightly around the sticks [see image] back and forth until you have a series of parallel strings filling the center gap.

Lastly, find some leaves and twigs and flowers to add to the nature loom you've made! Let them dry and hang it on the wall.

AN INSPIRED SNACK!

Let's make a mixed snack that recognizes and represents the variety of cultures and histories of the land we live on! Let's select a couple items to represent each of the important parts of historic life and diets. Talk about each ingredient with your family!



PLANTS

Choose some seeds, nuts, or berries that we eat today, and have been eaten for ages! **Sunflower seeds, grapes, blackberries, strawberries, popcorn, granola!** YUM!

ANIMALS

Choose some snacks to represent the animals people hunted and caught to eat. **Goldfish, Animal Crackers, Gummi Bears!** Well, maybe not the bears...

UTILITY...?

What kind of foods can represent utility? **Chex mix** can represent baskets and weaving! **Pretzel sticks** can represent lumber for building! Sometimes food can be fun, too!