

## Fast Facts

1. This is a small number of the variety of plants that First Nations of the Americas have nurtured and domesticated over the centuries and millennia.

None of these plants was known outside of the Americas before the early 1500s; unknown to the people in Europe, Asia or African countries!!

2. Some plants have undergone considerable change

e.g. corn (maize) has evolved through selective breeding from a plant with a few seeds to large cobs that require interaction with humans.

3. A considerable amount of this knowledge has been known for decades in some Indigenous communities and in the archaeological literature but has never caught on in public or educational resources.

4. The development of a number of these plants has literally changed the directions in world history

e.g. potatoes, corn, cotton as a main clothing material before synthetics, or rubber from the Amazon, think of Henry Ford with no rubber tires for his vehicles.

5. Most of these plants are rarely credited as having been developed by First Nations and are routinely misidentified with countries that have made them widely known in recent centuries

e.g. potatoes with Ireland rather than the mountainous areas of South America, or chocolate with West Africa or Europe (Belgium) rather than Mexico.

6. Many of these plants are highly nutritious and their adoption can have profound health impacts.

7. The relatively recent adoption of these foods in health stores has generated a growing awareness of these plants.

8. The recent increased use of ethnic foods has developed awareness

e.g. foods like dragon fruit, persimmons, and yerba mate are suddenly appearing in large numbers of food stores and in markets, but their original developments are often not acknowledged.

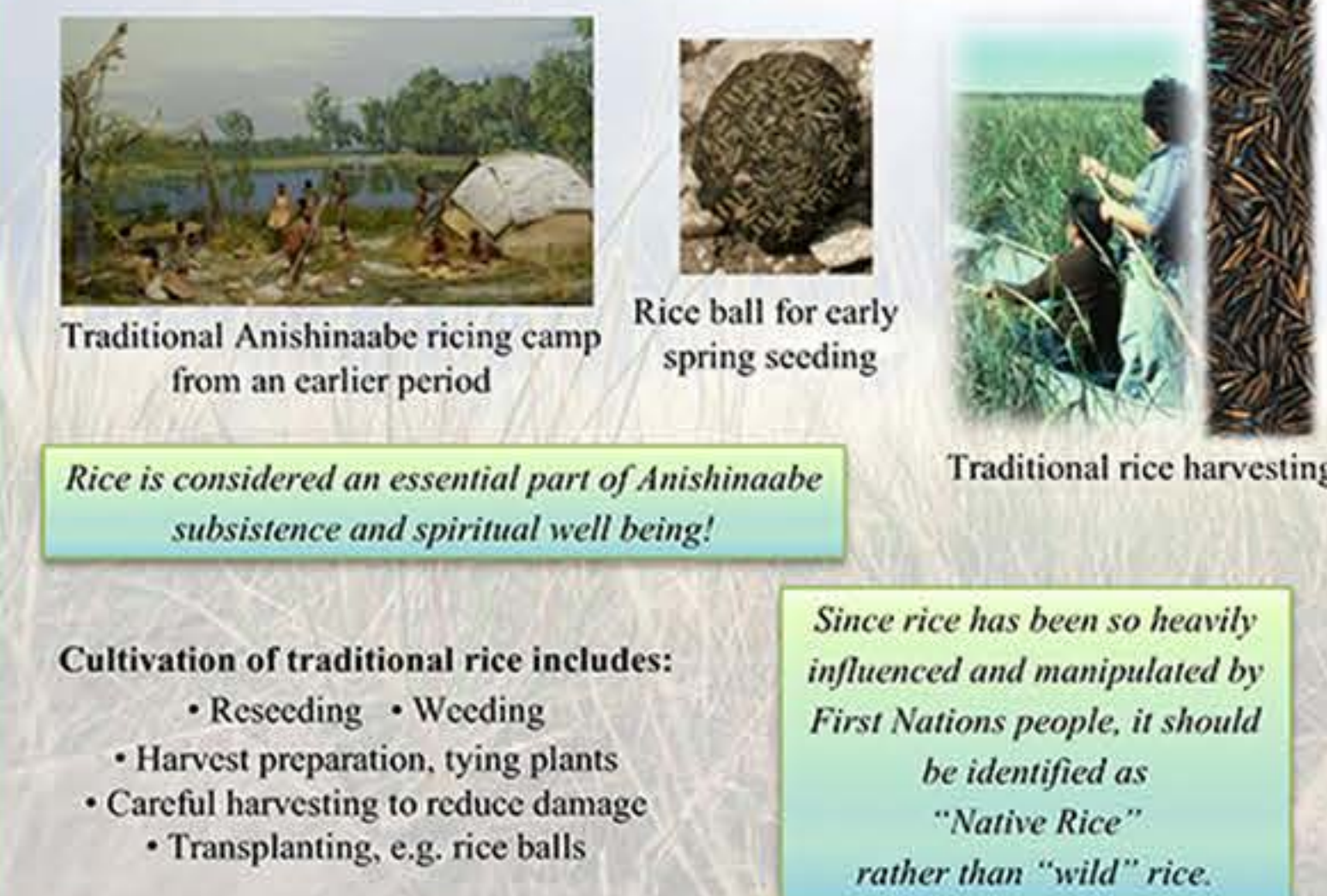
9. An important group of plants domesticated and cultivated by First Nations in North America is the Eastern Agricultural Complex, a group of seven plants that were formerly important food resources that dominated North America before corn swept throughout the continent and reduced their central roles.

These are squash (Cucurbit pepo), goosefoot (Chenopodium berlandieri), sunflower (Helianthus annuus), erect knotweed (Polygonum erectum), marsh elder or sumpweed (Iva annua), maygrass (Phalaris caroliniana), and little barley (Hordeum pusillum).

They may have made up about 67% of the plant diet about 2500 BP.  
Some such as squash date back at least 8,000 years.

They were developed in the eastern U.S. and were so important that this area has been identified as one of the 10 centres of plant development in the world.

### Cultivation of Native Rice

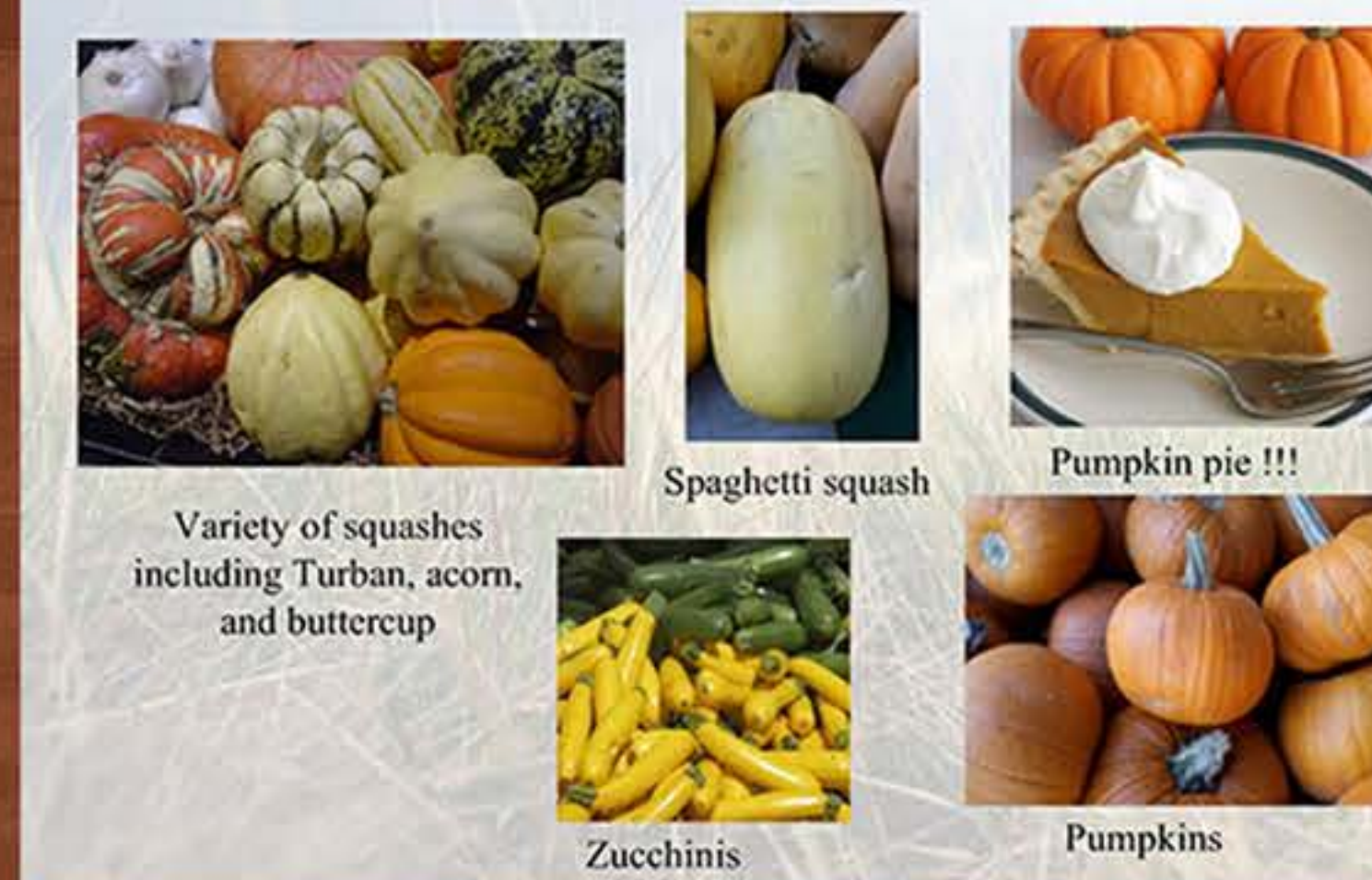


### Beans of Many Kinds



### Squashes

Including pumpkins, gourds, and zucchinis

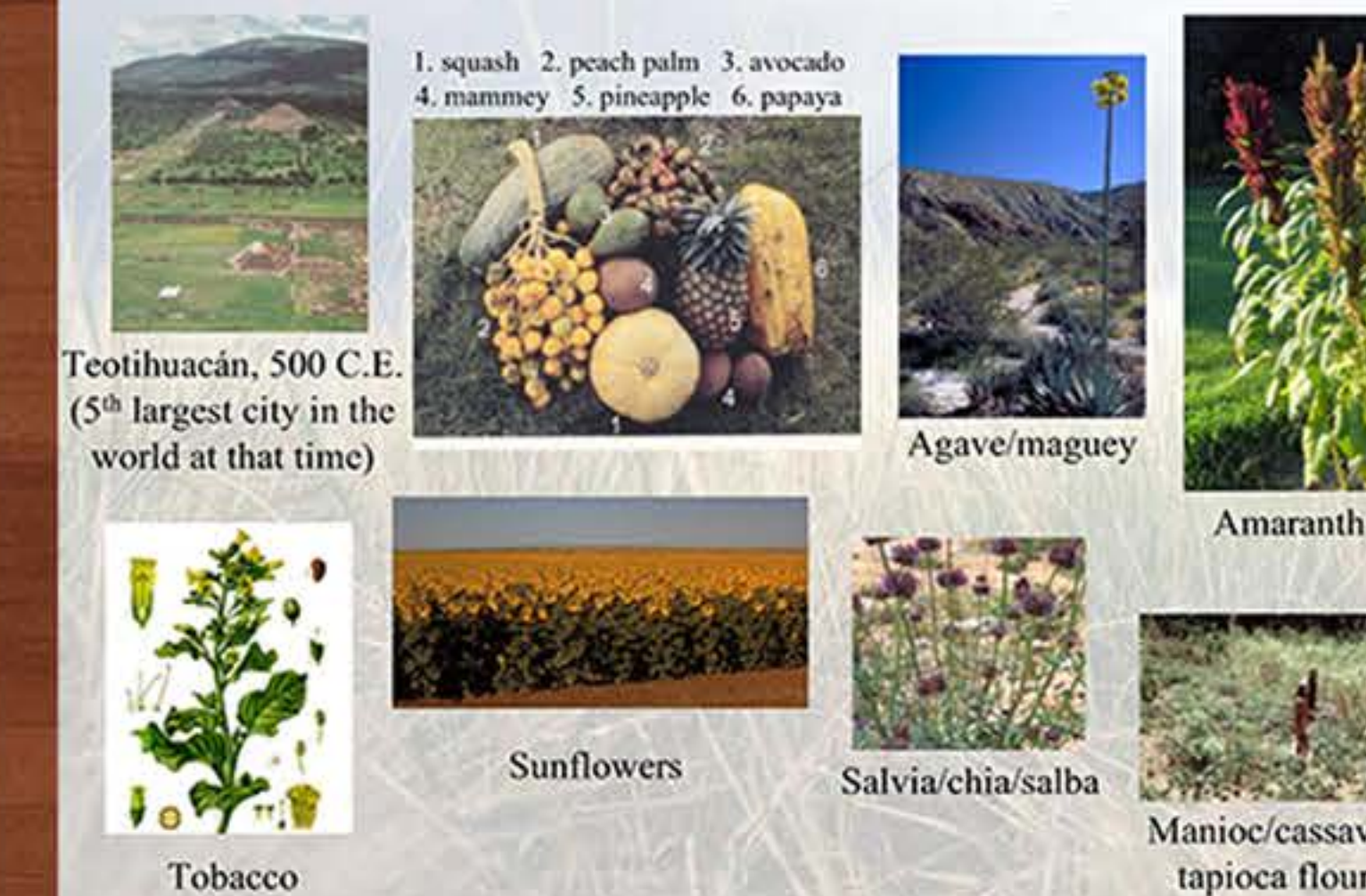


### Peppers and Peanuts



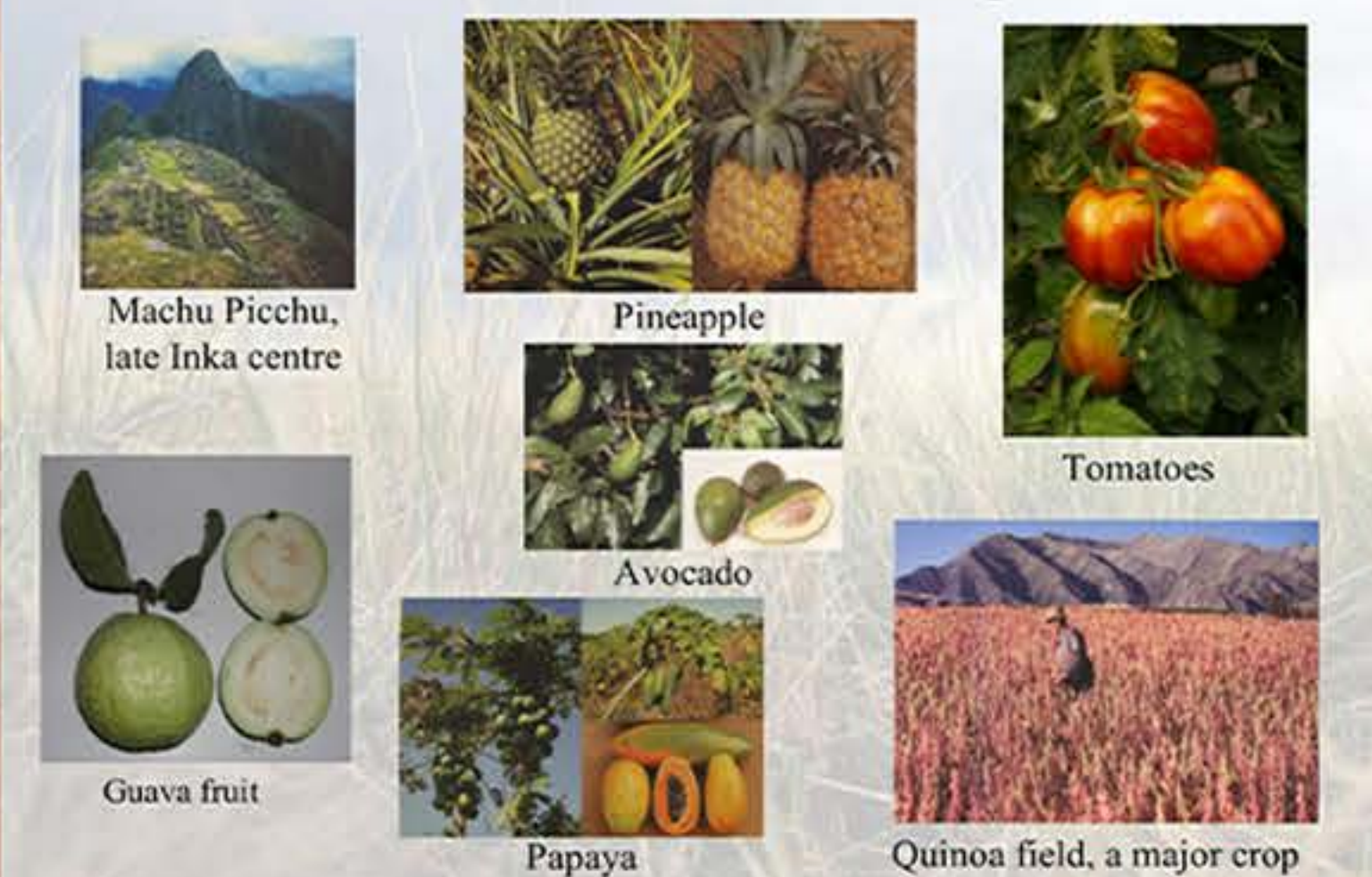
### Central American Plants

Some of the more common plants

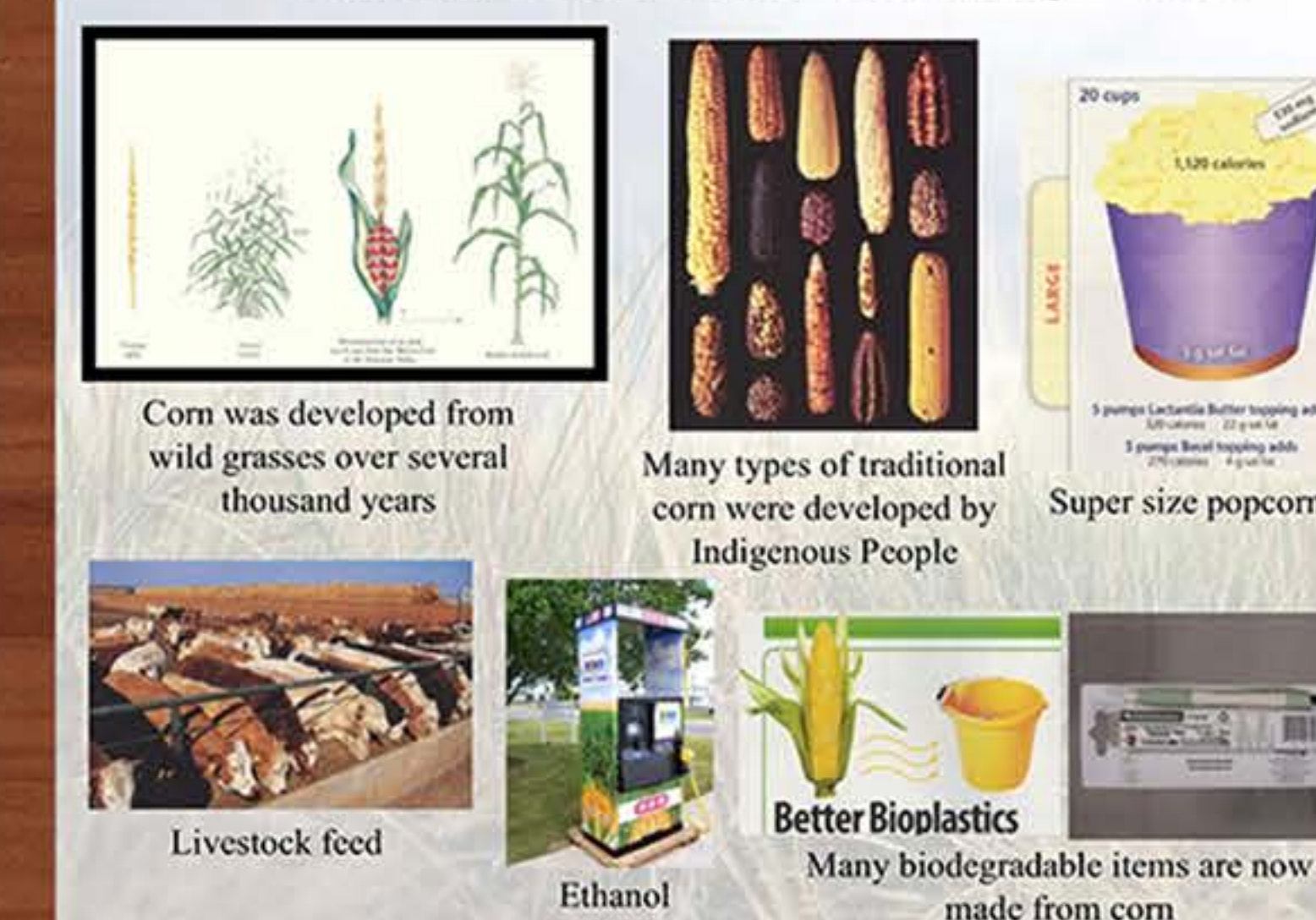


### South American Plants

Some of the more common plants



### Corn/Maize: the Most "Amazing" Grass



### Chocolate and Vanilla



### Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes



### Important Industrial Materials

Rubber and Cotton

