The Agricultural Legacy of Tucson's Birthplace

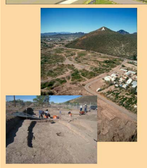
Tucson's birthplace preserves archaeological evidence of more than 4,000 years of agriculture and 3,500 years of canal irrigation

The earliest farmers, circa 2100 B.C.

Hohokam farmers, circa A.D. 1000

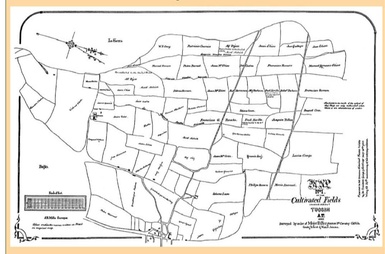
Tucson's fields, circa 1915

The Mission Visita at Tucson

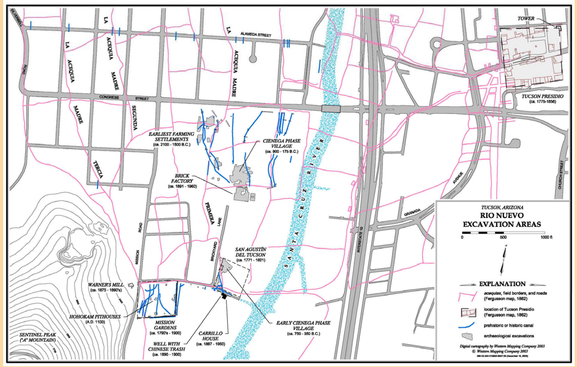


1752	After Pima revolt in 1751, Sobaipuris in middle Santa Cruz Valley resettled only at Bac and Tucson
1757	Jesuit Father Bernhard Middendorf first resident priest – stayed only briefly
1762	250 Sobaipuris from San Pedro Valley relocated to Tucson by Spanish military
1771	First visita chapel built within defensive wall for Franciscan Father Francisco Garcés
1782	Father Velderrain watched Apache attack on Tucson presidio from chapel roof
1795-96	More than 200 Papagos resettle in Tucson
1798	First chapel described as deteriorated; work probably began on second chapel
1810	Second chapel and convento completed by this time

Tucson's irrigated fields in 1862



Canals found below Sentinel Peak range in age from 3,500 to 130 years ago



A Photographic History of the Mission Garden

1880

1936

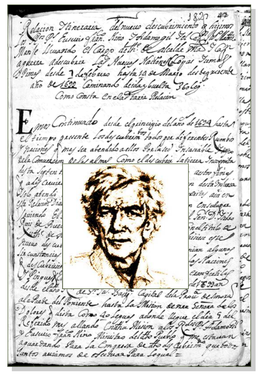
1930

2009

Mission Garden
Spanish-Colonial Orchard & Vineyard

The **Spanish-Colonial Orchard and Vineyard Project** was funded by a grant from the Arizona State Forestry Division to the City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office. Match funding was provided by the Friends of Tucson's Birthplace and the Southwestern Foundation for Education and Historic Preservation. This funding supported the initial planting, a drip irrigation system, and public workshops and educational materials. In honor of the Arizona statehood centennial in 2012, this project planted 100 Kino Heritage Fruit Trees—direct genetic descendants of Old World fruit trees introduced to southern Arizona by Father Eusebio Francisco Kino and later missionaries and colonists during the Spanish Colonial period.

Kino, later missionaries and Spanish colonists of the 17th and 18th centuries introduced apple, apricot, date, fig, grape, olive, peach, pear, plum, pomegranate, quince, lime, orange, and other fruits.



The Kino Heritage Fruit Trees Project locates the oldest surviving heirloom fruit trees in southern Arizona and northern Sonora, and reproduces them from cuttings – as was practiced historically – such that new trees are identical genetic copies of the original plants.

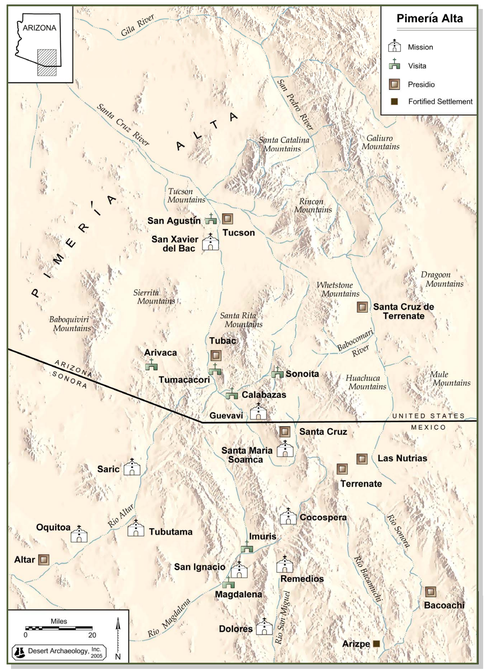
The Friends of Tucson's Birthplace, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, helped make this project possible through match funding and volunteer labor. Through their Kino Heritage Fruit Trees stewardship program, the Friends conducted fundraising to pay for other necessary costs.

This project had multiple partners, including:

- City of Tucson
- Friends of Tucson's Birthplace
- Pima County
- Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
- Desert Survivors Nursery
- The University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences/ Pima County Cooperative Extension
- Desert Archaeology, Inc

An advisory team made up of plant experts from a variety of organizations and perspectives designed the Orchard and Vineyard to be historically authentic and to thrive in Tucson's climate.

The concept of the Mission Garden has been developed with public input by BWS Architects and other consultants. The Garden will interpret Tucson's 4,000-year agricultural history. It is one portion of the overall Tucson Origins Heritage Park, a project approved by City of Tucson voters in 1999 as part of the Rio Nuevo ballot proposition.



Father Kino established a chain of missions in the Pimería Alta, at which he introduced wheat, cattle, fruit trees, and other Old World crops and transformed the subsistence of native peoples. Following him were Spanish soldiers, colonists, and other missionaries who also transplanted European agriculture and adopted native crops in what has been called the Columbian Exchange.

Arrivals of Old World Fruit Fruit Trees & Vines in Sonora/Arizona

Plant	Earliest Citation for Arizona or N. Sonora	Place
Stone Fruits		
apricot	mid-1600s	Hopi Mesas, AZ
peach	mid-1600s	Hopi Mesas, AZ
plum	before 1706	Kino Missions, Sonora/AZ
Citrus Fruits		
citron	1750s-1760s	northern Sonora
lemon	1730s	N. Tecoripa, central Sonora
lime	1700s	Sonora missions
orange, sweet	before 1706	Kino missions, Sonora/AZ
orange, sour	1750s-1760s	northern Sonora
Other Orchard Fruits		
apple	before 1706	Kino missions, Sonora/AZ
date palm	1700s	Hermosillo, Sonora
fig	early 1700s	upper Pimería Alta
olive	1750s-1760s	northern Sonora
pear	early 1700s	upper Pimería Alta
pomegranate	1700s	Mission Tumacacori, AZ
quince	1689	Mission Dolores, Sonora
Other Fruits		
Banana	1750s-1760s	northern Sonora
Grape, old World	early 1700s	Upper Pimería Alta

This list shows the earliest references in historical documents of the cultivation of Old World fruit trees and vines in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico.

Source: Gardens of New Spain, William W. Dunmire, 2004.

Stone Fruits

Apricot

Peach

Plum

Citrus Fruits

Lemons

Limes

Sour Orange

Sweet Valencia Orange

Citron

Other Orchard Fruits

Apple

Date Palm

Black Mission Fig

Olive

Pear

Pomegranate

Quince

Other Fruits

Mission Grape

Banana

MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE:
Spanish Colonial Orchard at Mission Garden:
<www.tucsonaz.gov/preservation/SpanishColonialOrchard>

Friends of Tucson's Birthplace: <www.tucsonsbirthplace.org>

Kino Heritage Fruit Trees Project: <www.desertmuseum.org/center/kinofruittrees.php>