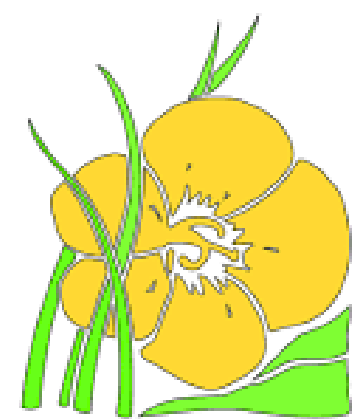


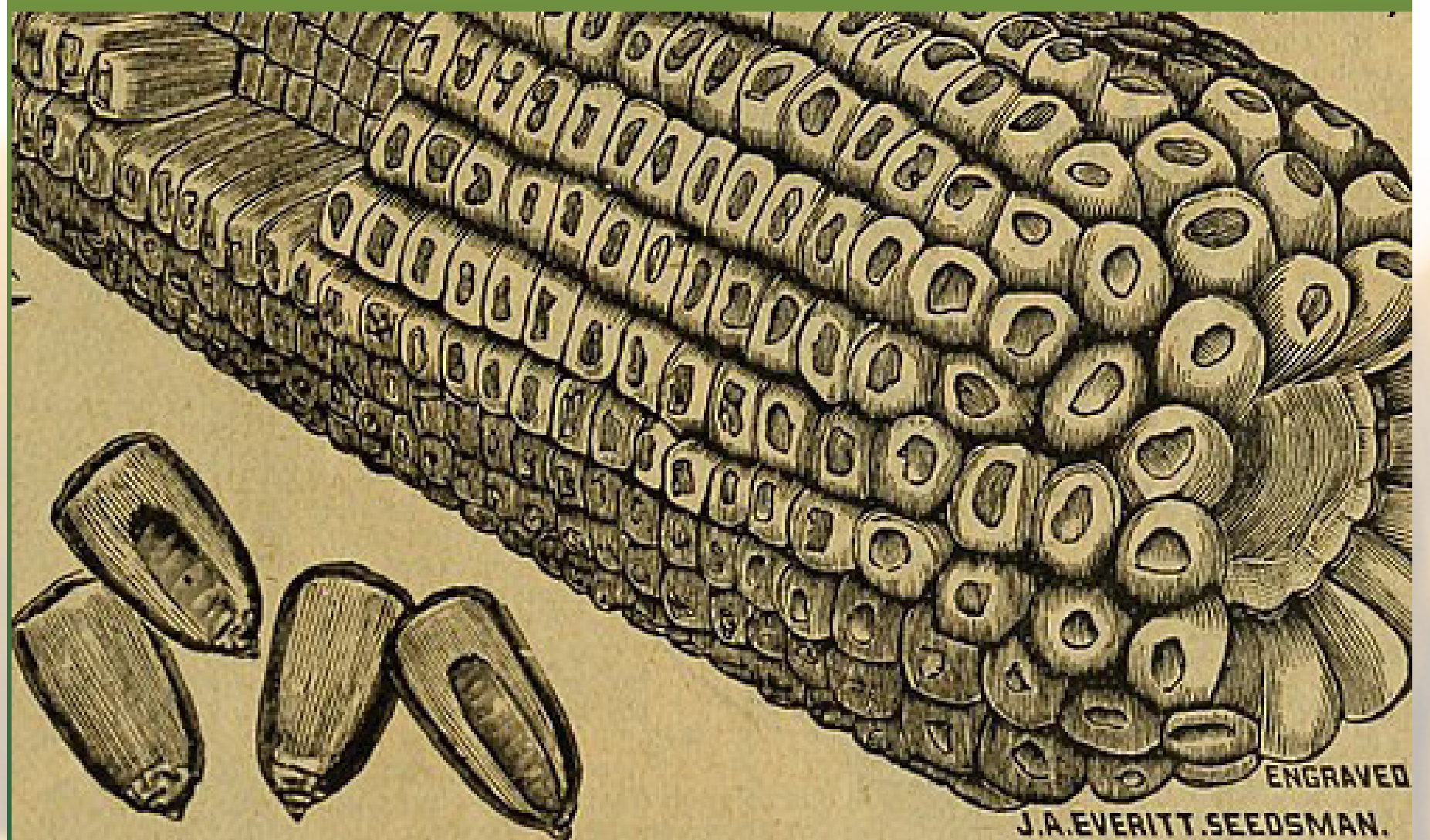
A-maizing Omissions



W. J. Beal
Botanical Garden

Inspired by Charles Darwin's observations on plant breeding, Professor Beal hybridized maize, also known as corn, to increase vigor. The result was a 53% increase in yield. This plaque claims Beal to be the first person to cross corn and gives him credit for the "miracle" of hybrid corn.

These claims are untrue.



This sign ignores the fact that, over thousands of years, North American Indigenous peoples developed maize from a wild grass known as teosinte.

Maize is drastically different from teosinte. Evolutionary geneticists marvel at the real miracle: a spindly plant with few chewy kernels was transformed into the plant that we enjoy today. Beal's contribution was an important step in developing modern corn production, but small compared to what came before him.



Please help us decide how to address this

This sign commemorates Professor Beal's contribution to increasing the yield of corn, but it also ignores the history of Indigenous peoples. Share your thoughts at <https://bealbotanicalgarden.msu.edu/> or email us at wjbeal@msu.edu.