

CORRECTION

Domestication is the process of adapting wild plants and animals for human use. Domestic species are raised for food, work, clothing, medicine, and many other uses. Domesticated plants and animals must be raised and cared for by humans. Domesticated species are not wild.

Plant Domestication

People first domesticated plants about 10,000 years ago, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia (which includes the modern countries of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria). People collected and planted the seeds of wild plants. They made sure the plants had as much water as they needed to grow, and planted them in areas with the right amount of sun. Weeks or months later, when the plants blossomed, people harvested the food crops.

The first domesticated plants in Mesopotamia were wheat, barley, lentils, and types of peas. People in other parts of the world, including eastern Asia, parts of Africa, and parts of North and South America, also domesticated plants. Other plants that were cultivated by early civilizations included rice (in Asia) and potatoes (in South America).

Plants have not only been domesticated for food. Cotton plants were domesticated for fiber, which is used in cloth. Some flowers, such as tulips, were domesticated for ornamental, or decorative, reasons.

Effects on Humans

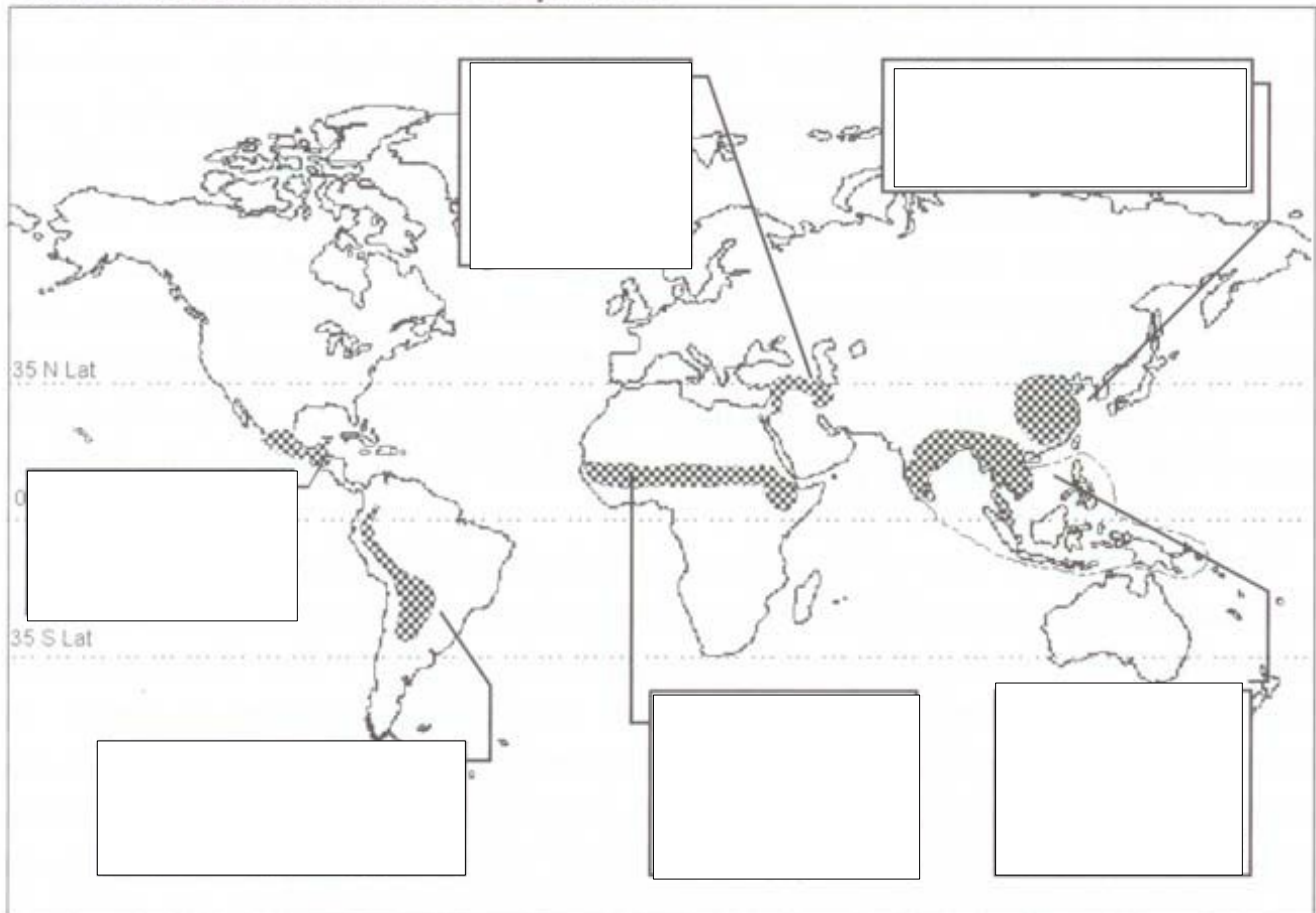
Domesticating plants marked a major turning point for humans: the beginning of an agricultural way of life and more permanent civilizations. Humans no longer had to wander to hunt animals and gather plants for their food supplies.

Agriculture—the cultivating of domestic plants—allowed fewer people to provide more food. The stability that came with regular, predictable food production led to increased population density. People were able to do more than hunt for each day's food—they could travel, trade, and communicate. The world's first villages and cities were built near fields of domesticated plants.

Plant domestication also led to advances in tool production. The earliest farming tools were hand tools made from stone. People later developed metal farming tools, and eventually used plows pulled by domesticated animals to work fields.

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/domestication/?ar_a=1

Centers of Domestication of Crop Plants



Location of the major centers of crop domestication and some of the crops domesticated in each of them. Source: Gepts 2001.

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