



(English, Spanish and Nahuatl)

- Amaranth is a grain that was grown in ancient Mexico over 6,000 years ago
- It was very important to their diet and in religious ceremonies. The leaves as well as the seeds were used as food.
- The Aztecs made little sculptures of amaranth and honey in the shape of their sun god, Huitzilopochtli and ate them in ceremony.
- When the Spaniards came, they didn't like this, so they outlawed the growing of Amaranth
- This was very hard for the people, as it was something they ate every day

With older students, there can be a deeper discussion of the ritual of eating the cakes and how this was viewed by the Catholic colonizers. Also, past info, now being debated, claims the cakes included blood from human sacrifice.

The seeds are very tiny. Imagine how hard it was to gather so many little grains for food!



It was often eaten popped over a fire, like popcorn

Or ground into flour.



“What do you think is happening here?” (harvesting and threshing) If you have saved amaranth flowers, the students can try extracting the seeds.



It can grow so tall!

- In hidden places, the grain was still grown and in recent years a lot more is being grown .
- It is very nutritious and high in protein.
- The little honey cakes survived, too...
- Street vendors and markets in Mexico sell them as the popular treat now called *alegría*, the Spanish word for happiness or joy.



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Fun to watch them being popped, which is tricky to do in the classroom.



We will make our Alegria with popped amaranth, pepitas (roasted pumpkin seeds) honey, and a little cinnamon

We can try to make shapes (maybe the sun? ...or just eat them with a spoon. :)