

Gourds brought to the Americas from Asia

December 13 2005

A Harvard University genetic study suggests ancient humans brought bottle gourds to the Americas from Asia some 10,000 years ago.

The thick-skinned bottle gourds widely used as containers by prehistoric peoples were likely brought to the Americas by people arriving from Asia, according to the genetic comparison of modern bottle gourds with gourds found at archaeological sites in the Western Hemisphere.

The finding solves a longstanding archaeological mystery by explaining how a domesticated variant of a species native to Africa ended up millennia ago in places as far removed as modern-day Florida, Kentucky, Mexico and Peru.

The work -- a collaboration of anthropologists and biologists from Harvard, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, Massey University in New Zealand, and the University of Maine -- appears this week online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Copyright 2005 by United Press International

Citation: Gourds brought to the Americas from Asia (2005, December 13) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-12-gourds-brought-americas-asia.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.