

2013 Indigenous Fellows Institute  
Connecting Tribal and Pacific Rim Colleges to Improve Indigenous Environmental  
Technology Education Programs

## Traditional Seasonal Calendars: Seasonal Calendars for Resource Management

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Knowing the seasons for when different food plants, varieties, and species produce fruits is very useful when managing resources. Some people use the knowledge when they plant food crops. For example, different breadfruit species produce fruits at different time of the year. In order to continuously have breadfruit, a landowner must plant the different species so when one stops producing, the others would.

Knowing when different fish species and animals are plentiful was very important to the traditional people because this was usually when they harvested them. Today, resource managers use this knowledge in their effort to control over-exploitation of these resources. When these organisms are plentiful, it is usually when they gather to reproduce. It was okay to harvest them during reproduction in the past because the population of the people was small, and the harvest was simply for subsistence. Today, fishing or harvesting during spawning season is no longer sustainable because there are too many fishermen. In addition, they now harvest no longer for their family consumption, but mainly to sell and for exportation. The traditional values and ethics are different from the modern values and ethics.

Project: Lecture about relevant knowledge and practices for planning, resource management and conservation for roughly thirty minutes. Divide up the class into six groups. Ask each group to come up with a calendar of the seasons for certain resources: a calendar of when these resources are available during a calendar year. For example:

- A calendar of the seasons which indicates when different varieties of mangoes produce fruit.
- A seasonal calendar depicting the weather patterns.
- A seasonal calendar depicting sea animals, open ocean fish, and/or reef fish.
- A seasonal calendar depicting spawning seasons for the same species at different locations (such as in a lagoon vs. outer islands).
- A more complicated calendar which combines a variety of resources, such as the different stages of breadfruit development and the availability of the breadfruit as an edible food source, the weather patterns, the sailing seasons, different star groups and the short-term

weather conditions associated with the different stars, and the month of the year when the stars appear.

- Special note: This calendar is very useful for travelers. Those people who are very knowledgeable on the use of this last calendar usually observe the dawn and the stars and could predict the upcoming weather conditions to the exact hour when such weather conditions like rain, strong wind, or calm weather will happen, and for how long. Sometimes when it's very calm, they would advise travelers to depart or not depart because soon the weather would change. Other times they would advise travelers to depart, even if it's windy, because the wind would calm down soon. These predictions are based on the stars and their locations.

Ask the students to gather information on these different topics by interviewing their elders. The students are to collect traditional knowledge.

Below are some images depicting this activity when administered by Kind Kanto at the College of Micronesia.







