

4. Argentine popcorn as a modern relic of prehistoric corn.

Argentine popcorn, one of the 10 "standard exotics" of Anderson and Brown (News Letter 25), has at least 4 characteristics which are typical of the oldest prehistoric corn known. These features are tiny ears, tiny kernels and sub-tassel ears with short shanks. The multi-eared condition and late maturity of this popcorn may be modern features developed during domestication in contrast to the majority of varieties in which increased productivity and its associated late maturity evolved along lines of increased ear size. Under favorable conditions the plants may develop as many as 12 tiny ears distributed at successive nodes along the culm. The shank of the uppermost ear may be extremely short and be borne at a node just below the tassel while the shank of the lowermost ear may be long and tiller-like and be borne close to the ground level. There is a progressive reduction in the length of these ear shanks borne at successive nodes above the crown in acropetal order along the culm as follows:

Length of Ear Shanks Borne
at Successive Nodes in
Acropetal Order Along Culm
of Argentine Popcorn.

Node	Length
1	13.4
2	10.4
3	9.7
4	7.8
5	5.2
6	4.8
7	4.5
8	3.9
9	3.7
10	3.0
11	1.9

Walton C. Galinat