

Grow Your Own Victory Garden!

*Today,
my friends
I beg your
pardon, but
I'd like to
speak of my
Victory Garden.
With a hoe for
a sword and
citronella
for armor,
I ventured forth
and became
a farmer ...*

**Ogden Nash
1943**



Detail, World War II
stationery, 1944

Lay the Groundwork

Planning is an important and sometimes overlooked step in creating a successful vegetable garden. Measure the area you would like to use as a garden and draw your own planting plan. Take advantage of the winter season to flip through some seed catalogues for inspiration.

Location of a vegetable garden is important. Most vegetables need direct sun to grow properly. Leafy vegetables like kale tolerate partial shade. When preparing your garden, run rows from north to south to expose both sides of the plants to sunlight.

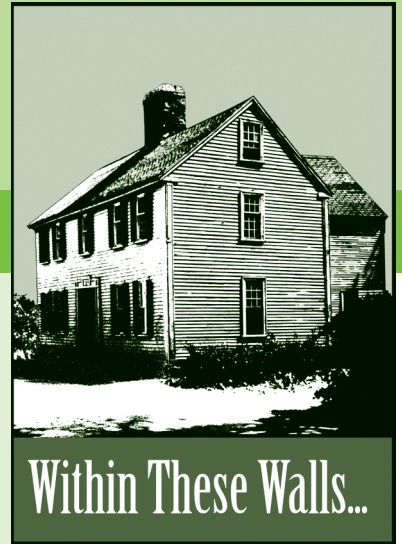
Research the hardiness and growing season of your area and look for plants that will grow in your climate.

Dig In

Prepare your garden plot by tilling the top layer. Don't have a tiller? No problem! Use a shovel and the double dig method to prepare the soil for planting. Healthy soil is necessary for root development, soil fertility, aeration, and water absorption. Enrich the soil by cultivating the land, using compost and adding an organic-based fertilizer. Soil should not be plowed or worked while wet.

Plant your seeds according to the package directions. Be sure to consider the amount of sun each plant will receive. Spacing is critical, so thin the seedlings by pulling them out as they grow.

Water your seeds and remember to keep watering your garden as it grows.



Visit the exhibition *Within These Walls...* on the 2nd floor of the National Museum of American History. There you will find a two-and-a-half-story New England house, originally built in the 1700s. Discover the story of Mary Scott and her family, who lived in this house during World War II and contributed to the war effort. View the kitchen where Mary Scott preserved vegetables grown in her victory garden.

Search the virtual exhibition at americanhistory.si.edu/house to learn more about the families who lived in the house over 200 years and experienced the great events of American history. The exhibition is sponsored by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS.®

The Victory Garden is at the National Museum of American History, which is located at 14th St. and Constitution Ave, NW, Washington, DC. Hours are daily 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Extended summer hours determined annually. Admission is free. For more information, please call 202-633-3717 or visit americanhistory.si.edu



Smithsonian Institution

A Spring Garden

The vegetables planted in the Smithsonian Institution's recreated Victory Garden were commonly grown during World War II and can still be found through seed catalogues and nurseries.

Victory Garden

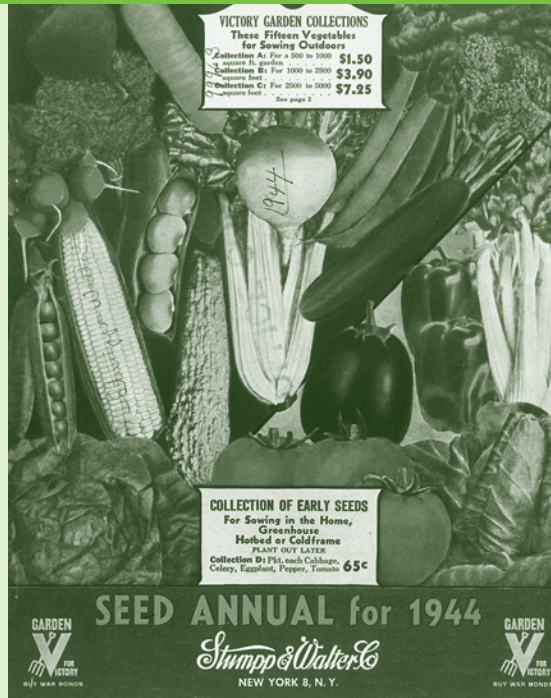
Smithsonian Gardens has recreated a World War II victory garden on the west terrace outside the National Museum of American History's Stars and Stripes Cafe.

What Is a Victory Garden?

Victory gardens were vegetable gardens planted in the United States during World War II in order to ensure an adequate food supply for civilians and troops. The goal was for citizens to produce enough fresh vegetables through the summer for their immediate family and neighbors.

Government agencies, private foundations, businesses, schools, and seed companies all worked together to provide land, seeds, instruction, and educational posters for individuals and communities to grow food.

From California to Florida, Americans plowed backyards, vacant lots, parks, baseball fields, and schoolyards to set out gardens. Children and adults planted, watered, fertilized, and weeded in order to harvest an abundance of vegetables. Any excess produce was canned and preserved for the winter and early spring until next year's victory garden produce was ripe.



Courtesy Smithsonian Institution Libraries, Horticulture Trade Literature Collection

WWII-era vegetables

Carrot

Amarillo
St. Valery

Lettuce

Bronze Arrow
Forellenschuluss
Black-Seeded Simpson
Tennis Ball

Kale

Red Russian
Early Curled Siberian Kale

Onion

Red Wethersfield
Siskiyou Sweet

Peas

Alderman Tall Telephone
Corne De Belier
Green Arrow

Radish

Red Meat
White Icicle

Spring Garden Tips

For a head start on your garden, you may want to start some of your seeds indoors, usually 5-7 weeks before the last expected day of frost.

Good plants to start indoors include:

- ★ tomatoes
- ★ basil
- ★ peppers

January

- ★ review, research and plan for the upcoming growing season

February

- ★ order seeds

March

- ★ start indoor plants
- ★ plant cool-weather greens

April

- ★ continue planting outdoors
- ★ begin to harvest early greens

if you wish to replicate a World War II-era Victory Garden.

A Summer Garden



Courtesy Smithsonian Institution Libraries, Horticulture Trade Literature Collection

Basil

Lettuce Leaf
Mrs. Burns Lemon

Beans, Bush

Black Pencil Podded

Beans, Pole

Kentucky Wonder ('Old Homestead')
Dow Purple Podded
Good Mother Stallard

Beans, Lima

Red Calico

Corn, Popcorn

Strawberry

Corn, Sweet

Stowell's Evergreen
Golden Bantam
Texas Honey June

Cucumber

Lemon
Early Russian
Suyo Long

Eggplant

Black Beauty
Rosa Bianca

Muskmelon

Hale's Best
Pike

Okra

Clemson Spineless

Pepper

California Wonder (Sweet)
Marconi (Sweet)
Black Czech (Hot)

Pumpkin*

Rouge Vif D'Etampes

Squash, Summer

Yellow Crookneck
Cocozelle Bush

Squash, Winter*

Blue Hubbard

Tomato

Yellow Pear
Brandywine
Mortgage Lifter
Cherokee Purple

Watermelon

Moon and Stars
White Wonder

*Plant in summer for fall harvest

Summer Garden Tips

Harvest crops often, as old vegetables left on the plant drain energy from new growth.

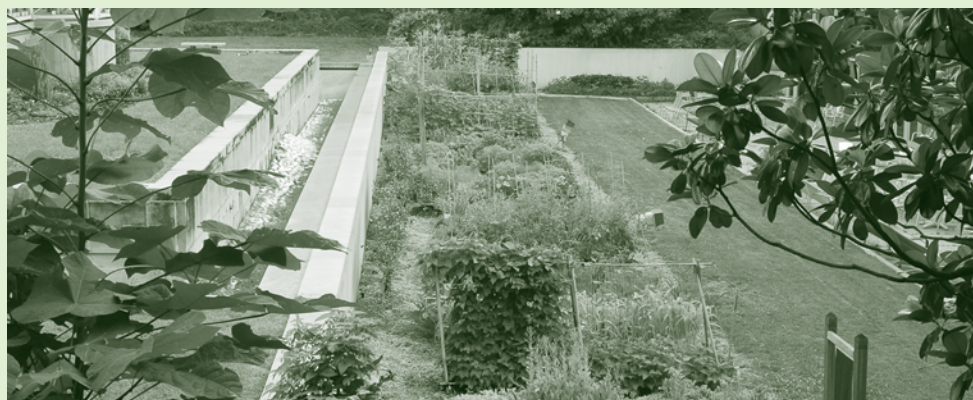
Weed your garden often. Vegetables need room to grow.

As your vegetables grow, **thin** the rows as needed by pulling out some of the seedlings.

What is Your Soil Type?

The type and texture of your soil will help determine the kinds of vegetables you will be able to grow successfully. Compare the amounts of sand, silt, and clay in your soil to determine if you need to add compost before planting by taking a soil sample and calling your local cooperative extension service.

The perfect garden soil has a texture known as loam.



May

- ★ put out warm-weather plants
- ★ prepare garden soil for summer crops

June

- ★ pull cool-weather plants
- ★ re-plant with more warm-weather plants

July

- ★ weed the garden
- ★ mulch around plants
- ★ watch for garden pests
- ★ water garden often

August

- ★ begin to harvest and cook with your crops
- ★ plant cool-weather greens

A Fall–Winter Garden

These plants, put into the ground in the late summer, can extend the growing season into cool weather. Some crops may continue to grow in mild winter weather.

Beets

Detroit Dark Red
Bull's Blood
Chioggia

Broccoli

Calabrese

Cabbage

Early Jersey Wakefield

Carrot

Amarillo
St. Valery

Cauliflower

All-Year-Round

Lettuce

Bronze Arrow
Forellenschluss
Black-Seeded Simpson
Tennis Ball

Kohlrabi

Purple Vienna

Parsley

Extra Curled Dwarf

Parsnip

Sugar Hollow Crown

Radish

Red Meat
White Icicle

Spinach

Viroflay
Bloodsdale Long Standing

Swiss Chard

Ruby

Turnip

Purple-Top White Globe

Fall–Winter Garden Tips

When harvesting, create a **compost pile** of leftover (but not diseased) leaves and plants on the ground and use them as mulch.

Grow **cover crops** during the autumn and winter to help control erosion and add organic matter into the soil when the cover is turned over in the spring.

Cover crops include annual ryegrass, oats and barley.



Poster, Office of War Information, 1943

Harvest More Information

To learn more about the Victory Garden or Smithsonian Gardens, contact:

Smithsonian Gardens
Smithsonian Institution
P.O. Box 37012
Capital Gallery
Suite 3300 MRC 506
Washington, DC 20013-7012
www.gardens.si.edu



Smithsonian Gardens

September

- ★ final harvest of summer vegetables

October

- ★ clear out garden refuse and add to compost pile
- ★ add last season's compost to soil
- ★ sow a covercrop to control erosion

November

- ★ put out frost protection

December

- ★ finish harvesting cool-weather plants
- ★ evaluate the success of this year's garden