Victory garden

Victory gardens, also called war gardens or food gardens for defense, at private residences and public parks in the United States, United Kingdom, I and World War II. George Washington Carver wrote an agricultural tract and "Garden". They were used along with Rationing Stamps and Cards to reduce pressure on the public food supply. Besides indirectly aiding the war effort, these gardens were also considered a civil "h"empowered by their contribution of labor and rewarded by the produce grown on the home front.
Two American war gardeners in 1918
World War I

Canada

Victory Gardens became popular in Canada in 1917. Under the Ministry of Agriculture's campaign, "A Vegetable Garden for Every Home", residents of cities, towns and villages utilized backyard spaces for war effort. In the city of Toronto, ladies organizations brought expert gardeners to schools to get school children and their families interested in gardening. In addition to gardening, home owners were encouraged to keep hens in their yards for the purpose of collecting eggs. The result was large production of potatoes, beets, cabbage and other useful vegetables.

United States

American WWII-era poster promoting victory gardens
In March 1917, Charles Lathrop Pack organized the US National War Garden Commission and launched the war garden campaign. Food production had fallen dramatically during World War I, especially in Europe, where agricultural labor had been recruited into military service and remaining farms devastated by the conflict. The supply of food could be greatly increased without the use of land and manpower already engaged in agriculture, and without the significant use of transportation facilities needed for the war effort. The campaign promoted the cultivation of available private and public lands, resulting in over five million gardens in the USA and foodstuff production exceeding $1.2 billion by the end of the war.

President Woodrow Wilson said that "Food will win the war." To support the home garden effort, a United States School Garden Army was launched through the Bureau of Education, and funded by the War Department at Wilson's direction.

**World War II**
The British "Dig on for Victory" poster by Peter Fraser
Australia launched a Dig for Victory campaign in 1942 as rationing and a shortage of agricultural workers began to affect food supplies. The situation began to ease in 1943; however, home gardens continued throughout the war.

In Britain, "digging for victory" used much land such as waste ground, railway sports fields and golf courses were requisitioned for farming or vegetable growing. Sometimes a sports field was left as it was but used for sheep-grazing instead of being mown (for example see Lawrence Sheriff School § Effects of the Second World War). By 1943, the number of allotments had roughly doubled to 1,400,000, including rural, urban and suburban plots. C. H. Middleton's radio programme In Your Garden reached millions of listeners keen for advice on growing potatoes, leeks and the like, and helped ensure a communal sense of contributing to the war effort (as well as a practical response to food rationing). County Herb Committees were established to collect medicinal shortages, for instance in Digitalis purpurea (Foxglove) which was used to regulate heartbeat. Victory gardens were planted in backyards and on apartment-building rooftops, with the occasional vacant lot "commandeered for the war effort!" and put to use as a cornfield or a squash patch. During World War II, sections of lawn were publicly plowed for plots in high and low, chipping in to the national struggle. Both Buckingham Palace and planted at the instigation of King George VI to assist with food production.
United States

Amid regular rationing of food in Britain, the United States Department of Agriculture encouraged the planting of victory gardens during the course of World War II. Around one third of the vegetables produced by the United States came from victory gardens.\[10\] It was emphasized to American home front urbanites and suburbanites that the produce from their gardens would help to lower the price of vegetables needed by the US War Department, thus freeing up money that could be spent elsewhere on the military: "Our food is fighting," one US poster read. In total, there were 18 million victory gardens in the United States - 12 million in cities and 6 million on farms.

Eleanor Roosevelt planted a Victory Garden on the white house lawn in 1943, becoming the first US First Lady to institute a garden in the white house. Woodrow Wilson grazed sheep on the south lawn during World War I to avoid mowing the lawn. Eleanor Roosevelt’s garden instead served as a political message of patriotic duty to garden, even though Eleanor did not tend to her own garden.\[13\] While Victory Gardens were portrayed as a patriotic duty, 54% of Americans polled said they grew gardens for economic reasons while only 20% mentioned patriotism.

Although at first the Department of Agriculture objected to Eleanor Roosevelt using White House grounds, fearing that such a movement would hurt the food industry, basic information about gardening appeared in public services booklets distributed by the Department of Agriculture, as well as by International Harvester and Beech-Nut. Fruit and vegetables harvested in these home and community plots was estimated to be 9,000,000–10,000,000 short tons (8,200,000–9,100,000 t) in 1944, an amount equal to all commercial production of fresh vegetables.\[15\]\[16\]

The Victory Garden movement also attempted to unite the Home-front. Local communities would have festivals and competitions to showcase the produce each person grew in their own gardens. While the garden movement united some local communities, the garden movement separated minorities like African Americans. At harvest shows, separate prizes were awarded to “colored people”, in similar categories, a long-held tradition in Delaware and the deeper South, as well as in Baltimore.\[17\]
In New York City, the lawns around vacant "Riverside" were devoted to victory gardens, as were portions of Golden Gate Park. The slogan "grow your own, can your own", was a slogan that referred to families growing and canning their own food in victory gardens.[18]

A Victory Garden is like a share in an airplane factory. It helps win the War and it pays dividends too.
— Claude Wickard, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Postwar

In 1946, with the war over, many British residents did not plant victory gardens, in expectation of greater availability of food. However, shortages remained in the United Kingdom, and rationing remained in place for at least some food items until 1954.

Land at the centre of the Sutton Garden Suburb in Sutton, London was first put to use as a victory garden during World War II; before then it had been used as a recreation ground with tennis courts. The land continued to be used as allotments by local residents for more than 50 years until they were evicted by the then landowner in 1997. The land has since fallen into disuse.[19]

The Fenway Victory Gardens in the Back Bay Fens of Boston, Massachusetts, and the Dowling Community Garden in Minneapolis, Minnesota remain active as the last surviving public examples from World War II. Most plots in the Fenway Victory Gardens now feature flowers instead of vegetables while the Dowling Community Garden retains its focus on vegetables.[20]

Since the turn of the 21st century, interest in victory gardens has grown. A campaign promoting such gardens has
the form of new victory gardens in public spaces, victory garden websites and blogs, as well as petitions to renew a national campaign for the victory garden and to encourage the re-establishment of a national victory garden. In March 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama planted an 1,100-square-foot (100 m²) "Kitchen Garden" since Eleanor Roosevelt's, to raise awareness about healthy food.[21]

Films

Several countries produced numerous information films about growing victory gardens.

Canada

- World War II
  - *He Plants for Victory* (1943)

United Kingdom

- World War I
  - *Grow Vegetables For War Effort*
  - *War Garden Parade*
- World War II
  - *Dig For Victory!* (1940, 1941, 1942)
  - *Children's Allotment Gardens* (1942)
  - *Compost Heaps for Feeding* (1942)
  - *Digging For Victory* (1943)
  - *Winter Greens* (1943)
  - *Blitz on Bugs* (1944)
  - *Dig for Victory - Proceed According To Plan* (1944)

United States

- World War II
  - *Victory Gardens* (1941, 1942, 1943)
Television

Historical documentary and reality television series such as *The 1940s House* place modern families in a recreated wartime settings, including digging victory gardens.

The *WGBH* public-television series *The Victory Garden* took the familiar expression to promote cropping for homeowners who wanted to raise some vegetables (and some

See also

- Australian Women's Land Army
- Community garden
- Home front during World War II
- List of renewable resources produced and traded by the United Kingdom
- Rationing in the United Kingdom
- United States home front during World War II
- Women's Land Army
- Woman's Land Army of America

References

4. ^ Hayden-Smith, Rose: Sowing the Seeds of Victory (Jefferson, NC: Mc
5. ^ "Victory gardens, Second World War". *Australian War Memorial*. 
Further reading


• Kuhn, Clifford M., "It Was a Long Way from Perfect, but It Was Working: The Canning and Home Production Initiatives in Green County, Georgia, 1940–1942," *Agricultural History* (2012) 86#1 pp. 27–43.


### External links

- Recipe for Victory: Food and Cooking in Wartime
- PBS: *The Victory Garden*
- A Visual History of Victory Gardens curated by Michigan State University
- *Victory Garden* complete film at archive.org
- History of Urban Gardening in the United States
- *GARDENS FOR VICTORY* reference pubbed Mar. 1942, intro/first chapter
- Victory Garden Initiative - a grassroots organization in Milwaukee, Wis promoting revival of the victory garden movement as a means to address food system and environmental issues
- *Oldest Remaining Victory Gardens in Boston*
- 1943 propaganda film *He Plants for Victory* (National Film Board of Canada)
- 1941 propaganda film *Victory Gardens* (United States Department of Agriculture)

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