

## Victory (Wartime) Gardens



*During World War II, the United States had to ship large amounts of food overseas to feed the troops. At the same time, many farmers had joined the military and could not look after their farms. This meant there was not as much food available for people to eat. The government created a Victory Garden campaign to promote home gardening. Growing a Victory Garden was a way for people at home to grow nutritious food and feel patriotic, too.*

People plowed backyards, vacant lots, parks, baseball fields, and schoolyards to set out their Victory gardens. These gardens were planted with easy-to-grow vegetables, fruits, and herbs. The goal was to produce enough fresh vegetables through the summer for the immediate family and neighbors. Any excess produce was canned and preserved for the winter and early spring until next year's Victory garden produce was ripe.

- During World War I and II, Victory Gardens were planted in America, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany.
- There were nearly 20 million Victory Gardens in America alone and these gardens produced 40% of the nation's food supply.
- Children and adults fertilized, planted, weeded, and watered in order to harvest an abundance of vegetables.



### What can I plant in a Victory Garden?

The keys to planting were to choose crops that took little space (so no potatoes or corn) and that were easy to grow. Here is a list of vegetables you might try:

Leaf Vegetables	Root vegetables	Stalk Vegetables and Legumes	Bulb Vegetables	Fruits
Leaf lettuce, Kale, Head Lettuce, Boston Lettuce, Cabbage, Swiss Chard, Mustard Greens	Carrots, Yellow Turnips, Radishes, Celeriac, Parsnip	String Beans, Dwarf Peas, Lima Beans, Edible Soy Beans	Onions, Spring onions, Leeks	Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Sweet Peppers

## Who can tell me more about Victory gardens?

Many senior citizens will know about Victory Gardens. They might have even grown one. You can become a journalist and interview a senior citizen who had a Victory Garden to learn more about why they were important. You might interview a grandparent, a war veteran, or someone at a local senior citizens home. Remember to ask politely, and to write a thank you card when you are done. Plan your interview before hand, and practice with a friend first. Here are some questions you might ask:



- What is different between gardening now and when you were young?
- Where did you grow your Victory Garden?
- What was the best or worst thing you remember about your Victory Garden?

### More things to do...

- Compile your interview segments into an oral history “program” to share with other classes, your elder friends, or to stream on your Web site, or create a book from these stories with your commentary.
- Design a garden using ideas, plants, or techniques described by your elder friends. Perhaps they can even help you work on it!

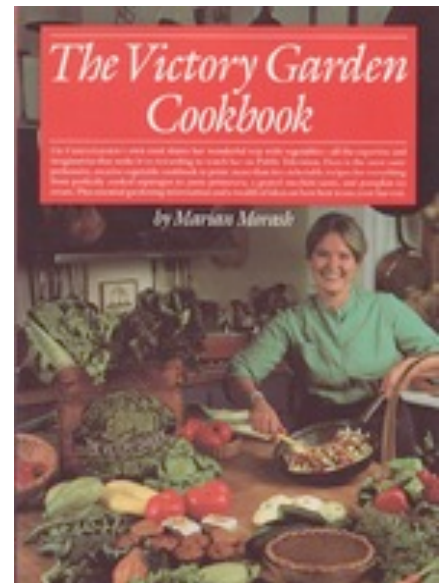
## Cooking with Victory Garden Produce

There are literally thousands of recipes you can create from a Victory Garden. A book full of such recipes has been written by Marian Morash.

### Grated Sautéed Beets and Carrots

4 medium beets	fresh lemon juice
2 medium carrots	salt and pepper to taste
4 T. butter or olive oil	chopped fresh dill or parsley

Wash, peel, and coarsely **grate** the beets. **Melt** butter in a frying pan, add beets and carrots to **coat** with butter, and **sprinkle** with lemon juice to taste. **Cover** and cook for 10 minutes, cooking until just **tender**. Season and **garnish** with remaining ingredients.



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### References and Resources

- Victory Garden Seed Company (2010). *The Victory Garden*. Retrieved from <http://www.victoryseeds.com/TheVictoryGarden>
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