Victory Gardens Encyclopedia Article

Victory Gardens

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Victory Gardens

During World War I (1914–18), when food was in short supply on the American home front, people planted vegetable gardens for their own personal use; these gardens were called "victory gardens." When the United States entered World War II in December 1941, Americans needed no encouragement from the government to get started on their victory gardens. They began planting in the spring of 1942, and soon small garden plots were everywhere—backyards, vacant lots, public parks, and even in front of city halls, schools, and prisons. By April 1942, six million gardens had been planted.

In 1943 twenty million victory gardens yielded eight million tons of produce. Once harvested, the vegetables had to be canned for preservation, a job that Americans took on in their own kitchens. The victory gardens produced more than one-third of all vegetables grown in the United States and provided 70 percent of the vegetables consumed by Americans on the home front. Victory gardens became a key symbol of the will of the American people on the home front to pitch in to win the war.