

America in Wartime

Hands-On Activity

Victory Garden

Grades: K – 5, 5 – 8

Materials: Vegetable seeds or plants of your choosing; soil, plant food, stakes, gardening tools and gloves, internet.

“Victory Gardens, also called "war gardens" or "food gardens for defense", were gardens planted both at private residences and on public land during World War I and World War II to reduce the pressure on the public food supply brought on by the war effort. In addition to indirectly aiding the war effort these gardens were also considered a civil "morale booster" — in that gardeners could feel empowered by their contribution of labor and rewarded by the produce grown. These gardens produced up to 41 percent of all the vegetable produce that was consumed in the nation.”

-City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America, Laura Lawson

Instructions:

- 1) Talk with your child about the difficulties encountered with feeding the troops as well as local communities during war time.
- 2) Decide what vegetables you think are most useful, and easy to cultivate.
- 3) You can choose to buy seeds, or existing plants to put in your garden.
- 4) Look up tips and recommendations for the vegetables you choose to plant, and have your child put together a step by step process from planting to harvesting.
- 5) When you get your first harvest, have your child locate a recipe(s) for the vegetables harvested and, if old enough, let the child prepare the food.
- 6) Write a letter to a friend, family member, or government employee about recommendations you have for growing their own “Victory Garden.”