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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

copy

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Friday, February 2, 1945

ANNOUNCING A CHANGE

Beginning next week, Homemakers' Chats will come to you in a new dress - a stream-lined model of two pages of shorter stories with an occasional longer story. The Chats will be mailed daily instead of once a week and they'll be for release upon receipt. They'll continue to appear on the traditional pink sheets. Your comments and suggestions will be appreciated.

SUBJECT: Why Garden in 1945...Information from garden specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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In a grocery store the other day I heard two friends talking. One of them was complaining about her food bills. "We have to eat," she said, "But the bills are piling up. Wish there were some way to cut 'em down."

"Well," her friend told her, "We're going to dig up the old plot again this year and garden. That helps."

The homemaker didn't say it, but she and her family are not only getting ready to provide themselves with fresh vegetables for next season, they're also putting in a lick on the homefront to help win the war.

Home gardens are linked with victory...and pretty closely too. Say you grow a garden...look at the things you accomplish. First...that garden helps supply your family with lots of good fresh things to eat. Then the food you grow releases that much for direct war uses. Not only that, your garden saves transportation space. The food you eat from it would have had to be shipped to you...you see. It also saves food processing equipment and labor. You'll probably put up as much of the produce from it as you can.

"But," you might ask, "do we really need gardens this year? Isn't our national food supply big enough without them?"

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Here's what War Food Administrator Marvin Jones has to say about it. I'm quoting a statement he made recently. "We can't afford to slow down now. History shows that nations with ample food supplies are the ones that win victories. We cannot afford to gamble. We must do everything we can to make certain that every one of our fighting men has all the food he needs. Home gardeners produced over 40 percent of the fresh vegetable supply this year, and we are asking them to equal this record in 1945."

So the answer is yes. We need home gardens this year.

Forty percent of our fresh vegetable supply is not an amount to be sneezed at. We did a good job last year. The wartime food managers are asking us to do it again. And that means all of last year's gardeners and maybe more will be planting and weeding their plots before long.

The United States Department of Agriculture made a survey awhile back to find out what people had grown in their home gardens, what problems they'd run up against, and if they didn't garden...why not. You can probably guess the main reason many people living in cities didn't have one. It was lack of space. About half those covered by the survey gave that as their reason.

Some cities got around the problem with a little organizing and planning. For example, one town I know of listed all the city owned lots at the city hall. Anybody who wanted one of them simply went there and registered for the lot he liked. The city didn't charge anything for the use of the ground. After all, a good garden on it increased the value of the lot quite a bit.

Another town listed in the county agricultural agent's office all the privately owned lots as well as those the city owned. People went there to sign up for the use of the garden space they wanted.

In a third city, the victory garden committee took over the job of finding lots for prospective gardeners. The committee would get plots for those who had none... and it arranged for community garden plots too. These community plots were plowed

and harrowed by the committee...and each person who took one of them paid three dollars for the work.

You've heard of private businesses helping their workers find suitable garden space. Well...one company laid out garden plots on its ground last year. Eight acres were divided up into 160 small plots. The one thing that company has learned from this project, says one of its officials, is that the employees want larger plots and more of them this year.

It's funny how much space some gardeners would like to have. To hear them talk, you'd think they needed a whole acre to really show their stuff in. Large gardens are fine if you can take care of them, but the fact that your plot is small shouldn't be at all discouraging. Garden experts tell us we can make a tiny garden really pay off.

A friend of mine had one of those tiny gardens last year. It ran along his back fence. The rows were not more than ten feet long...and the garden was only fifty or sixty feet wide. But he got enough fresh vegetables from that space to supply his wife and him all during the growing season. Then they canned a supply of beans, tomatoes and squash that they're still eating from.

The way you make those little gardens pay, the experts tell us, is to plan your garden carefully. As soon as you've used up one row of vegetables, plant it in something else as long as the season lasts. It's called succession planting.

One last thing. If you'd like to garden this year but want a little help in the form of information...you can get it from your county agricultural agent or your local victory garden leader. Both will be glad to help out.

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