

Victory Gardens: Success in Today's Gardens

New perspectives, ideas, resources for today's victory gardeners.

By Lisa Kivirist (continued from Victory Gardens: A Salute to Self-sufficiency- page 2 of 2)

Success in the Modern Victory Garden

While we can learn much from the victory gardens of the past, part of the growth of today's renewed interest stems from the fresh, innovative ideas gardeners bring to the movement.

"History can prove to be an amazing teacher," sums up Hayden-Smith from her historian perspective. "We need to remember to look at past movements like the WWII victory gardens and sift out key insights while creatively adapting things to our current times and situation, like climate change or more expensive energy."

Consider this crop of new perspectives from today's victory gardeners:

Self-define "Victory Garden"

Victory gardens of World War II organized collectively for a common patriotic cause of war support.

For victory gardeners today, think about and define what your personal mission is for this effort. Do you want to lessen your use of fossil fuels by eating local? Or perhaps improve your health through fresh, organic produce? What about lessening our country's economic dependence on food imports?

However you define your mission, by embracing the victory-garden concept with a purpose, you transform your efforts to a more meaningful level.

Likewise, if you've been gardening for years, consider taking your efforts up a notch and adding your personal victory-garden definition to your labors and harvest.

Express Yourself

"The WWII victory garden manuals tend to be extremely formulaic, detailing exactly how to garden," explains Price. "But today's victory-gardener movement is about personal style. Embrace your own creativity and use your garden to express yourself. Don't feel compelled to fit a certain mold or expectation. If your garden is a bit messy, like mine, that's just fine."

Be A Garden Angel

"Socially, we're in a very different place than we were 50 years ago," says Doiron. "Back then, there was lots of know-how and information exchanged between family members and multi-generations who would garden together. It was much easier to get started in gardening because you had mentors in your family or neighbors to turn to." [Click here for a savory recipe for Victory Garden Vegetable Au Gratin](#)>> Make it your mission to share your knowledge with others by being a "garden angel"—adopting new gardeners and offering your support, experience, sense of humor and friendship when the first zucchini planting yields zero plants.

Rethink Expectations

"Too often we fall into a trap of what a garden is, when we should plant certain things and how food should be preserved," says Doiron.

"Try to think more broadly about your garden based on your family's needs. If you have a big family that loves salad, consider adding cold frames and extend your greens into the winter. If you're a single person, freeze pesto in an ice-cube tray, and you'll end up with easy-to-use, single-portion cubes."

Connect on the Internet

The accessibility of the Internet today enables victory gardeners to share their stories globally with a few clicks of the keyboard.

Use the Internet to evolve from a home gardener to a victory-garden advocate and educator by sharing your story and

experiences with others.

Pamela Price's blog, www.redwhiteandgrewblog.com, chronicles her own gardening experience and serves as a means for her to promote and tell the story of today's victory-garden movement. The ability to interact via blog comments enables Price to connect directly with other garden enthusiasts.

Kitchen Gardeners International offers various forums and groups to ask questions and prompt discussion amongst gardener enthusiasts from across the globe.

Garden with Passion

Don't let this current victory-garden revival meet the same fate as post-World War II, falling out of fashion in the unlikely chance that food prices decline.

Embrace the joys and satisfaction that come through raising your own food, finding both meaning and passion in your victory garden. Make it an anticipated part of your lifestyle, not a burdensome chore.

Dig for democracy in your own backyard and salute those squash, strawberries and salad greens. Contribute beyond your family's food supply when you embrace a victory-garden mindset, sowing seeds with others for a healthy, fresh, fair and green food system for the future.

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