



VICTORY GARDENS

During World War II, large amounts of **commercial crops** (a specific fruit or vegetable that farmers grow and then sell to grocery stores) and other goods were needed to feed sailors out at sea, as well as other members of the military that were stationed in Europe. Many families on the home front had to **ration** items like canned vegetables, sugar, meat, coffee, and dairy. This meant that each family in America was only allowed to have a small portion of certain items and they could only purchase these items if they had a ration stamp. This helped to make sure everyone got a fair share when there weren't enough supplies to go around. Imagine not having milk for your breakfast cereal or adults with no coffee!

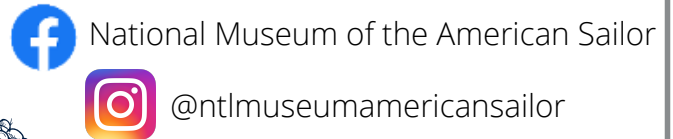
Many families started to grow their own fruits and vegetables in **Victory Gardens** to help with food shortages. These gardens were placed wherever space was available: flower boxes, apartment rooftops, windowsills, backyards, or even vacant lots. Families might trade with their neighbors if they had too much of certain foods. For example, if you grew carrots in your Victory Garden you might trade a bushel of them with your neighbor for some extra sugar.

Some of the most popular produce that was grown in Victory Gardens were beans, beets, cabbage, carrots, kale, lettuce, peas, tomatoes, turnips, and squash. Posters were shared across the country to talk about Victory Gardens and it quickly became a family project where everyone would help.

Does this sound like something you'd enjoy doing with your family? Use the second page for inspiration to start your very own Victory Garden!

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read the brief history of Victory Gardens.
2. Test your knowledge with "True or False?" questions.
3. Use the "Plan it Out!" section to decide what fruits or vegetables to plant in your garden.
4. Gather the supplies needed and work with your family to start your own Victory Garden!
5. Learn how to whip butter.
6. Tag the National Museum of the American Sailor on social media when you've started your Victory Gardens:



TRUE OR FALSE?

Circle the correct answer for the "True or False?" questions below.

World War II was over 100 years ago.

True False

Families grew their Victory Gardens wherever space was available.

True False

Kale wasn't a popular choice of produce to grow in Victory Gardens.

True False

Commercial crops were used to feed sailors during World War II.

True False

This activity kit has been provided by the National Museum of the American Sailor

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STARTING YOUR OWN VICTORY GARDEN

Having a garden might seem like a lot of work, but it's simpler than you might think! Follow the steps below to start your own Victory Garden in time for the planting season!

Decide where to grow your garden. From a small apartment to a large backyard, anyone can grow a Victory Garden!

Determine your growing zone. Research your area's growing zone to see when it is best to plant a garden. Northern Illinois is in Zone 5, for example, which means March-May are the best times to begin growing crops.

Pick what vegetables or fruits to grow. Lettuce, cucumber, carrots, tomatoes and radishes are among the best vegetables for beginners.

Gather your supplies. To create your own Victory Garden, you will need seeds of your choice, soil, an egg carton, popsicle sticks, water, and small planters. In addition, you can also optionally use plastic wrap and toothpicks.

Plant your garden. Take an egg carton and fill each section with dirt. Once your soil is settled, use one of the popsicle sticks to make a small hole and drop a few seeds in. Use the popsicle stick to cover the hole with dirt and mist the soil with water. Make sure you don't over water your seeds or they'll get moldy!

Watch your vegetables sprout. Place your egg cartons near a light source. This could be a growing lamp or a window ledge. This is optional, but you can place plastic wrap over your egg cartons to create a mini-green house. The plastic wrap helps trap in heat and moisture that will help your seeds sprout. If you choose to do this step, make sure you use a toothpick or a similar tool to poke a few holes to help air circulate.

Care for your garden. Wait for the seeds to sprout and plant them in small planters. Since egg cartons are biodegradable, you can plant the whole carton in whatever planter you choose. It's important to make sure that planters are large enough for whatever plants you are growing. Continue to water and ensure plants get plenty of sunlight and watch your Victory Garden grow!



A sailor at Roosevelt Field in New York waters a Victory Garden window flower box in the mid-1940s.

Image courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command



PLAN IT OUT!

Planning out what you hope to grow in your Victory Garden is always a good place to start. What are some of your favorite fruits and vegetables? Do you think the sailors would enjoy them too? Use the space below to write down what you plan on growing in your Victory Garden!



- False! World War II technically started 82 years ago, but the United States didn't enter the war until December 7, 1941.
- True. Families across the United States felt the desire to help the war effort in anyway they could - even if that meant starting a Victory Garden right outside their bedroom window.
- False! Kale was a popular produce item to grow.
- True. Commercial crops, which are a specific fruit or vegetable that farmers grow and then sell to grocery stores, and other goods were needed to feed sailors out at sea.

True or False? Answer Key:

WHIPPING BUTTER

SUPPLIES

- Heavy whipping cream or whole milk
- Glass jar with a screw on lid (like an old spaghetti sauce jar)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour heavy whipping cream or whole milk into your glass jar and fill it between $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ way full.

(The fuller your jar is the longer it'll take to make your butter so it's important not to overfill!)

2. Screw your lid tightly onto your jar and shake vigorously for 15-45 minutes.

3. You will notice the butter has separated from the cream and turned into a ball. This is how you know your butter is done!

4. You can carefully take your butter ball out of the jar and lightly rinse with water.

5. Now the most important step – enjoy! Spread your butter on your favorite bread or biscuits.

