

## VICTORY GARDENS

I received an email News Letter this week from the Organic Consumers Association: web at: <http://www.organicconsumers.org/> (An interesting web site to keep up to date with what is happening with matters of concern with our food chain which you can subscribe too, to obtain their free news letters).

One item that caught my attention is called Victoria Gardens written by a Barbara L. Minton who is a school psychologist, in the USA and published author.

I had never heard of a Victory Garden (just a little before my time), as these evolved during the Second World War; I'll let Barbara explain: *What's a victory garden?*

*It was emphasized to urban and suburban dwellers that the produce from their gardens would help provide the nutritious food needed by the soldiers to keep them fighting strong. It would also help keep the price of that food low, so the War Department would have more money to spend on other military needs. The victory garden would also help solve the shortages of labor and transportation that made it difficult to harvest and transport produce to market. One poster from the mid 1940's reading, "Our food is fighting" portrayed the high sense of patriotism so characteristic of the time.*

Victory gardens were likely grown in NZ as they were in the UK, Canada, USA and Australia during World War 2. But the world war is well over so why this global call raised now for people everywhere to once again grow a Victory Garden? From Barbara; *These gardens now represent our fight to regain control of our lives and our health. They are the first battlefields against the increasing corporate tyranny, a battle that may end with us throwing off the philosophy of every man for himself and a realization that we are all together in this thing called life.*

How does this apply to you and the rest of us in New Zealand?

From the web: Victory Gardens Mean:

- Better Food - Fresher, better tasting, straight off the plant food, which money literally cannot buy!
- Better Health - More nutrition in just picked vegetables, grown without chemicals, while getting the kind of exercise many of us pay the gym for! Safety from industrial food contamination and toxic imports.
- Food Security - Food in your pots as prices get higher, supplies that can't be disrupted by energy shortages, greater regional self-sufficiency. Thousands of new gardeners can make sure that we don't have to wait for distant food supplies to be trucked in - weeks after they are needed. Every gardener makes your region more secure.
- Higher Quality of Life - A more beautiful environment, stronger community, a better environment.
- More Money in your Pocket, More Time for What Matters - If you don't need as much money for food, or to work as many hours to pay the grocery bills, you can use that money or take that time for what you really care about.
- The Chance to Serve Others and Create a More Just Society - Your Victory Garden can be a strike against hunger and poverty - you can have food to donate, and the ability to teach others to grow, and thus, eat for a lifetime.
- Reduce Corporate Power and Improve Democracy - We cannot simultaneously deplore the power corporations have in our society and depend on them to supply our most basic necessities. If we stop giving our hard earned money to the corporations who undermine our democracy, they will be less powerful!

-Protect Against Climate Change - Humus rich soils, full of organic matter can sequester tons of carbon, quite literally - and grow the best vegetables. We reduce our carbon emissions when we don't have to drive to the store or buy fossil fuel grown food.

-Reduce our Energy Dependence - Fossil fuels are used in agriculture, both industrial and industrial organic at every step, from the fertilizer in the ground to the refrigerated truck to plastic bag they come in. We can eliminate fossil fuels from almost every step when we grow our own.

-Create Peace - We are at war for oil - reducing our fossil fuel dependency through Victory Gardens gives us hope for Peace in our time.

-Hope for the Future - In a changing world, the ability to grow food, to share and enjoy it, and to live in a healthy world full of beautiful gardens may be the best legacy we can leave our children and grandchildren.

Ok, so we agree that we need Victory Gardens. How do we bring all the participants in this movement together, and create a real and national Victory Garden movement? How do we bring together professional farmers, with Victory Farms and city Gardeners, schools and community resources, and backyard advocates? How do we get Victory Gardening onto the national agenda? How do we teach thousands of people how to grow, cook and eat their own, and why?

One part, of course, is the person to person work we're doing now. The next step is to create a large-scale Victory Garden umbrella organization guided by people in every part of the Victory Garden movement - chefs and cooks helping people learn to eat, teachers helping children get involved, churches, corporations and community groups all putting gardens on public and private green spaces, local "garden farmer markets" where very small scale producers can exchange or sell their extra in their neighborhoods, climate change and energy activists working on this simple way to cut our energy usage and reduce atmospheric carbon. That is, we need a movement - a real, serious movement. And we can do this.

You can reach out to one neighbor, at least, and help them get started gardening. Share seeds. Talk to your community, your synagogue, mosque, church, neighbors, school about gardening. Take a risk - for greater security later. Plant a front-yard garden, centered on a "V" for Victory (cabbages look great like this, particularly mixed with nasturtiums or calendula, but use your imagination). Be courageous - we need this Victory!

It all makes common sense and the argument can not be deigned. In fact I have been advocating similar for some time now and here is a world wide movement started in the USA with its own banner, Victory Gardens.

If you are reading this, you are already a gardener and if you encourage and help one other family or person to start gardening their own food we have a massive movement on the way.

This could not have happened at better time of the year, Spring is here and gardening has started for the season. I have set up a Victory Garden Web page on my web site where you can email me with your name and location to form a list of Victory Gardens in New Zealand. See <http://www.gardenews.co.nz/victorygarden.html>  
Your way to be secure, save money, improve your health and make your world a better place.