

NEWS RELEASE

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Victory Gardens

During World War II, labor and transportation shortages made the harvest and distribution of fruits and vegetables difficult as well as expensive. Much of the food grown by farmers was sent to American troops. The federal government decided to call upon American citizens to grow their own food, and over 20 million Americans responded by planting gardens in backyards, abandoned lots and even on city rooftops. These gardens came to be known as “Victory Gardens.”

When the war ended, most city dwellers stopped planting fruits and vegetables. The advent of inexpensive canned and frozen food made food preparation simpler. Gardening became more of a hobby than a way to supplement food and income.

Since 1970, our nation’s consumption of fruits and vegetables has declined while the consumption of fast food has risen by 500%. The introduction of fast food has changed the way people eat. Food is consumed quickly, and often on the road. Fresh fruits and vegetables are not always sold at these restaurants, although recently some have added salads and other options to their menu.

Today, there is a “war” against obesity. Many Americans suffer from related problems such as hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea, and coronary heart disease, among others. Working in a garden and growing fresh fruits and vegetables may be one way to combat this problem.

University of California Cooperative Extension Advisor Rose Hayden-Smith has been working to start a new movement/era of Victory Gardeners. She believes the issue of obesity (as well as many other current issues in American life) can be addressed through the use of Victory Gardens. Access her blog at <http://groups.ucanr.org/victorygrower/>