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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Thursday, October 12, 1944

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SUBJECT: "Gardens for Next Year." Information from Ernest G. Moore, Manager, Victory Gardens Program, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Have you been wondering about a Victory Garden for next year? If you have, I believe you'll be interested in some news I have here from Ernest Moore, manager of the Garden Program for the United States Department of Agriculture.

Says Mr. Moore: "We cannot announce a garden program for next year -- that is, a nation-wide program -- until we have more facts about the food situation. And that, in turn is very closely tied up with the length of the war."

However, the National Victory Garden Advisory Committee, which met in Washington last month, went on record as recommending a broad program of home gardening for 1945, "to promote health, economy, attractive surroundings, and recreation." Another suggestion made by the Garden Committee is the employment of Extension agents, trained in horticulture, in cities and towns as well as in rural parts of the country.

As Mr. Moore says, the Department of Agriculture will be just as ready as ever to help out with information. They have a good stock of bulletins, and will be well prepared to answer questions on how and when to plant, how to control weeds and bugs, and all other garden problems. They're still counting on plenty of home gardeners, although Mr. Moore himself believes there'll be a kind of "screening out" process. That is, people who have grown food for patriotic reasons...from a sense of duty... may feel that their duty is done when the war in Europe is ended. Especially if they're among the many worthy folks who have been gardening on poor soil...or on plots away from home...or if they're so busy with other work they hardly have time to garden.

Of course, as Mr. Moore says, if a serious need for food should arise again,

these same folks will be right out there digging. As for the rest of us, those who've learned a great deal about gardening during the past two years, many of us will go right ahead and have a vegetable garden next year, and maybe try our hand at flower-gardening too.

Mr. Moore believes that gardening has taught people a number of things that will carry over long after the war is ended. One of these is to put into practice some of the things we already know about nutrition.

Says Mr. Moore: "The best way in the world to teach a person nutrition is to get him to grow a garden. He may think he's not interested in vitamins, but if he grows a lot of tomatoes and greens and cabbage and so on, those 'green and yellow vegetables' we hear so much about, then he's bound to get his vitamins anyway, and they're mighty easy to take if he grows them himself."

Still another reason for gardening--it's one of the finest of all kinds of recreation. It gives you a chance to get out in the fresh air...on your old clothes... and pretty soon you're so busy helping to make things grow -- you don't have time to worry. (Of course some of us have done a little worrying about our gardens, but as Mr. Moore points out, that's "constructive" worrying -- not the kind that gets you down.)

And here's something that will be of special interest to home buyers. There's going to be a tremendous demand for new homes when the war is over. In fact, one builder predicts there'll be a million new houses built every year for ten years after the war. But whether it's ten million or nine million, people who want a garden can see that these new houses are built on lots big enough to provide space for both vegetables and flowers, and they can see to it that the top soil is saved. When a house is being built, you can save the top soil for just a small extra charge, but if you let it be covered up with clay, as many people do, any top soil you get will cost a lot of time and money.

One more suggestion for the new home builders...pay close attention to foundation plantings. Of course we can't all be landscape gardeners, but we can at least learn to tell the difference between a shrub and a tree. Those little evergreen trees look beautiful when you move in. They're just the right height, for the first year or two, but before you know it they're ten feet tall, and hiding all the front windows.

So, as Mr. Moore says, when the war is over and you start making plans for a new home -- don't buy in haste and repent at leisure. Get a lot big enough to provide space for vegetables and flowers, get the right kind of foundation plantings, and save the top soil -- if you're a gardener at heart.

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