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Homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

9/13 HW
QUESTION BOX:

What to plant to store?
How save weeding?
What to plant for freezing?

ANSWERS FROM gardening specialists of U. S. Department of Agriculture

In looking over the Question Box today, we have selected as our first query one which is being asked in increasing number these days: "What are the best vegetables to plant to store for late fall and winter use?"

A very good question! Plant a Victory Garden, and "stick with it," It's good advice. Those who want to have a good garden also look forward to putting some of it away - like the squirrels. It's thrifty.

So in planting to store, plant carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips, salsify, and cabbage. Celery and Chinese cabbage may also be stored in cool cellars for a few weeks. Celery should be stored with roots in soil. If your garden is big enough say 50 x 100 feet or larger then you can grow some sweetpotatoes and Irish potatoes. In large gardens other crops that might be grown for storage are winter squash and pumpkin. And here's a suggestion, late varieties of cabbage are better for storage, than the early kinds. Learn the number of days required for maturity of the various kinds you want to store in July and August, and select varieties according to the number of days required.

Take a good look at your seed packets for further advice, and whenever you can do so consult your county agent, or Victory Garden authority in your neighborhood.

Growing vegetables for storing is not difficult, but here are four things to take special note of: 1. Be sure they have matured properly. 2. Handle them carefully. 3. Put them in suitable containers, and, 4. Put them in storage of the right temperature, humidity and ventilation.

Generally speaking, squash and pumpkins require moderately warm, dry storage,

and onions, other crops such as cabbage and peas must be kept in cool, dry places.

And now, here's a question that can't be discussed too often, and though we are necessarily limited as to time in these chats, let's state it briefly: "What can we do to save weeding chores?"

There is no way to do away with weeds, as we all know, but there are ways to keep these Fifth Columnists of the garden plot in their place. Let's say you've planted your garden and your vegetables are coming up nicely. Don't forget to cut off the weeds after a rain (when the ground dries out) by using a hoe or cultivator. Unfortunately, those who are over-enthusiastic can swing a hoe around and cultivate too deeply. This damages the vegetables. So watch your step - and hoe lightly.

Remember a good soldier never goes to sleep at his post and a good Victory Gardener don't let Old Enemy Weed sneak up on him, either, as we need every bit of food we can raise to help win this war.

"What shall I plant for freezing?" There is a question which shows, also that more and more gardeners are interested not only in having extra food during the summer, but plan to keep some of these good, healthful vegetables for future use.

Freezing keeps vegetables wonderfully fresh, and though we cannot discuss how to freeze things here, our garden and nutrition experts in the U.S. Department of Agriculture have made a list of things which lend themselves readily to freezing.

Here they are: Peas, green lima beans, broccoli, spinach, soybeans, snap beans, asparagus, and corn. Except for corn, which may take a little more watchful preparation, they are all easily prepared as well as easily grown by alert, active gardeners.

The average frozen food locker will hold 90 to 100 pounds, net drained weight of a vegetable such as corn, when packed in round glass jars - and 175 to 200 pounds when packed in rectangular containers. A quart container holds 24 ounces, drained of dry-packed cut asparagus, cut corn, lima beans, snap beans, or 21 ounces of spinach. This is regarded as a good, handy, economical size as it will provide eight servings.

But for more details ask your home demonstration agent. It is best to keep vegetables for freezing unusually clean, as freezing doesn't kill all microorganisms (germs to most of us). Also use containers specially made for storing frozen vegetables. Glass jars with covers do a good job - but they take up quite a lot of space and add to the storage cost.

With these three questions answered by those whose knowledge is expert (even though we haven't space to give you the full picture) we feel that you might wish to be reminded that booklets, pamphlets, and other written guides and helps are available to all who want more information. For example: Storage of Fruits and Vegetables issued by the Department of Agriculture is fine.

Food is ammunition - so let's make the best possible use of it.

