

## COMMITTEE REPORTS ADOPTED BY STATE GARDEN CONFERENCE

University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota  
January 26, 1943

## Report of Committee on Organization and Policy

The committee adopted the following recommendations regarding the organization and policies growing out of the State Garden Conference:

1. We recommend the growing of an adequate, long-season garden by every farm family, and so far as practical by all other families, for the growing of more fruits and vegetables for home consumption. We recommend also that together with the growing of an adequate garden, corresponding emphasis be put on the preservation, storage, and utilization of these products on a year-round basis.
2. We recommend that in each county the county war board invite the county extension service to call a county Victory Garden Conference corresponding on a county basis to the State Victory Garden Conference on a state basis. We recommend that all agencies and groups that can be of service in assisting with an improved garden program be invited to be represented at this conference and encouraged to contribute whatever they can to this common end. Included among the agencies or individuals which should be invited to cooperate are the following:

War board agencies, including A.A.A., F.S.A., F.C.A., R.E.A., Forest Service, Agricultural Extension or others.

Farm organizations, including Farm Bureau, Grange, Farmers' Union.

Schools, including Vocational Agricultural instructors, Home Economics teachers, county superintendent of schools, and representatives of city and village schools.

Civilian Defense agencies, including representatives of Consumer Interest groups, county nutrition committee, county chairman of Victory Aides.

Labor organizations, including representatives of C.I.O., American Federation of Labor, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, or others.

County government, including county commissioners, county nurse, county welfare board.

Civic groups, including representatives of parent-teachers' associations, county federation of women's clubs, chambers of commerce, luncheon clubs, garden clubs.

Trade groups, including any firms specializing in garden seeds or other garden supplies.

3. We recommend that a clearing committee be created to continue the broad objectives of this conference. We suggest that this committee consist of the following, with such others as these members may wish to add: Director of Agricultural Extension, University of Minnesota; Director of the U. S. Citizens' Service Corps, State of Minnesota; Chief of the Division of Horticulture, University of Minnesota; Director of Vocational Agriculture, Minnesota State Department of Education.



Report of Committee on Urban Gardens

The discussion centered around questions projected by the chairman. For the sake of clearness, these questions, the discussion of them, and the resulting recommendations are listed below in numerical order.

1. Whom do we recommend should grow a victory garden? What is an urban garden? Is distinction between urban and rural garden necessary? In answer to these questions there was discussion as to whether small flower gardens should be sacrificed to vegetables, whether such space was large enough to be effective and whether the soil was fertile enough. It was pointed out that some flower gardens are not suitable for vegetables but that where they are, part of such gardens might be put into vegetables and part retained for flowers. On the matter of plowing up front lawns, the committee felt that this was **not necessary this year**, although Prof. Longley advanced the opinion that some front lawns would benefit from such treatment. In answer to the question as to whether seed supplies would warrant much city gardening, Mr. Hunt said there would be enough seed for this year but there is a possibility of a smaller number of varieties.

The following recommendation came out of the discussion:

- a. That anyone having suitable ground, suitably located, be urged to grow a vegetable garden for summer consumption and winter preservation.
  - b. That those who have devoted considerable space to flowers be urged to give up part of that space to vegetables this year.
2. What crops are specially recommended for city gardens?

Some discussion ensued on methods of planting such as pole-supported crops compared with low crops; and double cropping of early maturing with late maturing vegetables.

The question of possible change in commercial truck gardening crops and the effect of such change on the home garden was held to be of little importance by the Ramsey and Hennepin county agents.

Recommendation: That special emphasis be given to leafy, green and yellow vegetables and to tomatoes as indicated by article 3 of report of the National Advisory Committee. (See page 4 of printed program of State Conference; also abstract of address by Miss Biester.)

3. Are community gardens recommended? What procedure, if any, should be set up for organizing such a movement? Following a discussion of some of the problems and benefits of community-gardening in the last war, the opinion was expressed that if enough individual activity could be arranged, community gardens should be avoided.

Recommendation: That community gardens be recommended only if there is a well-organized community group available or set up for proper supervision.

4. How can prospective gardeners be contacted?

Mrs. Nicholson of Duluth gave a comprehensive account of the plan worked out in Duluth by O.C.D. to set up and staff a downtown office to promote gardening and to answer questions about garden problems. This staff is to be picked from experienced gardeners. After June this clearing house setup will be turned over to the Consumer Interest Committee for information on preservation and storage.

It was reported that the Consumer Interest Committee of O.C.D. in Minneapolis had planned for a one-day short course on gardening problems at University Farm. A similar meeting is being held in the St. Paul Auditorium on February 8.

It was pointed out that the national O.C.D. urged a garden program but suggests that each municipality work out their own plans and that the program does not have to be headed up by any particular group but that some group should be in charge. It was suggested further that the committee on organization might report some plan setup.

Recommendation: That each locality work out its own organization as it sees fit but that all agencies concerned correlate their activities under one head.

5. What method should be used to give instruction or assistance to new gardeners?

Not much discussion here and no recommendation since it was felt this question was taken care of under recommendation 4.

6. What type of subject matter do city gardeners need? What source and method of distribution should be used?

Suggestions included possibility of bulletins or pamphlets to be printed cooperatively by the University and some other agency, radio programs over all radio stations and a special garden section in city and county newspapers.

There was a small amount of discussion as to whether a pamphlet or a bulletin would be most helpful and whether the publication of a pamphlet might lead to a call for a more comprehensive piece of literature like the present garden bulletin.

Recommendation: That available facilities such as radio and newspapers be used to spread information to urban gardeners.

### Report of Committee on Rural Gardens

#### Objectives

The committee calls attention to the recent survey of farm gardens in Minnesota, particularly that part which shows that more than 95 per cent of all farm families had gardens in 1942, but that a substantial proportion of these gardens were too small in size or too lacking in variety to supply the family with all of its needs during a 12-months' period.

The committee recommends that, considering present conditions, the principal objectives in any farm garden program should be to assist in obtaining on every Minnesota farm (1) a garden of the size and variety of products and (2) a program of storage and utilization such that the family will be provided adequately with garden products during a 12-months' period, reducing to a minimum the purchase of such commodities.

This implies the raising of a garden that is carefully planned to meet the family requirements for fresh vegetables and fruits and the storage, canning and other preservation of the products in a large scale and effective manner.

Such a garden program will contribute directly to the war effort by releasing critical materials for other uses and by curtailing the amount of transportation necessary for moving food products from centers of production to centers of consumption.

### Attaining the Objective

The committee members feel that the most important job in reaching the goal is to create in farm families a sense of the need for this sort of a program both from the standpoint of national welfare as well as self interest.

This can best be done by a program that stresses the following types of information:

1. Nutritional needs of the family based on accepted standards and the part that a garden can play in meeting those needs.
2. Cultural and varietal information, based on local situations as much as possible.
3. Methods of utilizing garden products to the best advantage, including consumption of the fresh product, and storage and processing for future use.

Owing to the need for reaching a large number of people in a short time and with a limited number of meetings, it is suggested that newspapers, farm papers and the radio be liberally provided with suitable garden and nutritional material and that they be given every encouragement to use it as freely as possible. It was the consensus of opinion of this committee that a program of this kind is advanced by repetition and the presentation of the same general information from as many angles as possible. Full use should be made of currently available material. Short, concise leaflets and posters should be prepared if additional material is needed. The Agricultural Extension Service and Experiment Station should supply the technical information to go into this printed matter and should be the main reliance for newspaper and radio publicity.

Whatever printed material is used should be timely so that it may be put into immediate use. Merchant advertising may well supplement the radio and press.

Meetings arranged through various agricultural agencies and organizations should be used as fully as consistent with current transportation curtailment.

The committee further suggests that all agencies and farm groups interested in farm family welfare cooperate in this program and combine their efforts and facilities toward the attainment of the above goals.

### Report of Committee on Food Utilization and Preservation

This committee considered five major questions.

1. What recommendations should be made as to type of crops which may be utilized to best advantage (a) in rural gardens and (b) in urban gardens?

It is the judgment of this committee that each garden, rural or urban, presents an individual problem in which the following factors should receive consideration:

- (1) The needs of the family for good nutrition and health.
- (2) The kinds of fruits and vegetables that can be grown successfully in the geographical area taking into account soil, rainfall, and length of growing season.
- (3) The amount of land, labor and equipment available as well as the degree of skill possessed by the home gardener.
- (4) The possibility of preserving or storing surpluses.

2. What recommendations should be made as to the extent that different methods of preservation should be used?

The committee recommends that a competent committee evaluate the relative merits of different methods of preservation as applied to specific fruits and vegetables. For example, should carrots be frozen, canned, stored or dried? Should the same method be given preference under all circumstances?

For many families canning continues to give results which are regarded as the most satisfactory method of preserving fruits and vegetables. The committee recommends continued stress on safe methods of canning, the development of plans for the better utilization of available pressure cookers, the testing of pressure cooker gauges by the State Department of Agriculture, and a continued effort to obtain additional pressure cookers. They further recommend that a subcommittee seek the cooperation of newspaper and broadcasting companies to the end that safe uniform methods of canning be advocated. Dr. Vacha, Chief Bacteriologist, State Department of Agriculture, stated that homemakers using the hot water bath method of canning nonacid foods should be given all precautions in safe handling of the food, emphasizing thorough cooking before tasting the food when the jar is opened.

Where cans, lids, rubbers or pressure cookers are not available as needed, or where homemakers have too little time in the summer for canning, the committee recommends that families store as much fruit and vegetables as possible without previous treatment such as canning or drying. There is need for reducing and eliminating spoilage and for increasing and improving storage facilities. During the winter there is more time for working on storage facilities than is the case during the summer months. Drying may be the method of choice for a few selected products such as sweet corn, peas, apples and herbs. Help is needed in designing or locating driers for home use as well as for preparing dried foods for table use.

No appreciable expansion is expected in the frozen locker industry. There continues to be need for education in the operation and use of freezer lockers, as well as in the preparation of frozen foods in the home. Help is needed in planning to keep lockers full and in selecting the kinds and amounts of foods to be frozen.

Brining has its widest usage in making sauerkraut, where other methods of storing cabbage are inadequate. The removal of salt from other brined vegetables probably results in the loss of both vitamins and minerals.

3. What special printed matter is recommended for promoting this part of the gardening movement?

The committee anticipates a continuing demand for pamphlets or bulletins on storage, canning, drying, freezer locker storage, brining, sulfuring and waxing, as methods of, or aids in, fruit and vegetable storage. The demand by city people for literature will probably increase but no funds are now in sight to meet this need.

4. What systems of distribution of surpluses can be worked out to prevent waste?

The committee proposes that the possibilities of various schemes of exchanging or using surpluses be given careful study. The help of Victory Aides and Neighborhood Leaders may be enlisted. Special committees may be appointed to work on the local problems. Local Food Distribution Administration committees may be of assistance. Finding competent help for harvesting and transporting surpluses is a serious problem in some localities. The possibility of an exchange arrangement was suggested where rural women lacking time for canning might provide raw materials and where urban women lacking fruits and vegetables might do the actual canning.

5. What special recommendations are needed relative to preparation of garden products for table use? The committee feels that continued emphasis is needed on the preparation of vegetables by methods that will conserve the vitamins and minerals which these vegetables provide.

#### Report of Committee on Gardening in the School Program

In the Minnesota course of study for schools, a definite place allotment is given to gardening in General Science II and in high school agricultural courses. If the present placement does not fit the needs of the pupils in the various schools, the subject matter should be taught in those grades where it is desirable, and at such a time as it would meet the needs of the boys and girls entering into the Victory Garden program.

The material to be taught should logically be prepared by agricultural instructors at University Farm. Probably no other people in our state would be as qualified to prepare authoritative material on the garden and its problems. It was recommended that these prepared lesson plans and program helps, along with reference material, be placed in the hands of the County Extension Agents. Each extension agent will then contact the County and City Superintendents in his area.

Integration of the material into the school program would be left to the superintendents, principals, and teachers. Thus placement and time allotments would meet the needs of each local community.

It was recommended that, as far as possible, the schools urge the planting of large family gardens with the boys and girls participating in the planning, planting, and maintenance of the family garden. This would also include gathering, preservation, and storage of the vegetables and fruits. This type of activity is much preferred to small individual children's gardens which are discouraged except in those urban areas where space for family gardens is limited.

It was pointed out that since teaching staffs are not on duty in the summer months, the planting of demonstration and school gardens was to be discouraged. For the same reasons, the committee felt that schools should not be encouraged to plant and maintain large cooperative gardens for the supplying of foods for the hot lunch program. It was felt that sponsorship of that type of garden should be left to P.T.A.'s and similar organizations.

Since family type gardens are to be recommended, the school must necessarily stimulate interest among the parents and all other adults in the community. It is recommended that the teachers and pupils in every school should prepare an entertaining and instructive evening program to stimulate the necessary interest among the adults. The material prepared by the Agricultural Extension Service should contain helps and material for the use of the schools in preparing and presenting such a program.

Supervised follow-up will be necessary if the program is to succeed. It is vitally important that some adult leaders carry on the program after the school principal and teachers leave for their summer vacations. The teacher should be able to announce the names of those who will carry on with the program when she or he leaves. Such an announcement might well be made at the time of the pupils' program. Adult leaders might be recruited from the local P.T.A., Victory Aides, Neighborhood Leaders, or Garden Club. Four-H or scout leaders might take over the work. Perhaps it might be advisable in some districts to establish a parent organization to provide such leadership.

It is recommended that boys and girls should be encouraged to join established garden clubs such as provided by the 4-H, but such membership should not be a prerequisite for enrollment in the school Victory Garden project.

To further stimulate interest and measure results, exhibits from these Victory Gardens should be displayed at local or county fairs. Each county is urged to prepare a simple check sheet for the use of the boys and girls in measuring and reporting their gardening accomplishments. These sheets would then be returned to the school sometime in the fall quarter.

#### Report of Committee on Seed, Fertilizer and Other Garden Supplies

These questions were discussed: first, as to what problem they presented to the the gardener; second, what should be recommended if a problem exists.

#### 1. What is the vegetable seed situation?

According to representatives of seed companies on the committee, there appears at present to be an adequate supply of all garden seeds for 1943 even though large amounts of different seeds are being sent abroad through lease-lend.

#### 2. What will be the insecticide situation?

Supplies will not be liberal and substitutes may be necessary in some cases, but some type of dust or spray material will be available for most needs if used carefully.

Types and quantities: Sulphur material - adequate supply; nicotine material - adequate supply; copper material - about equal to 1941 supply; arsenical material - 10 to 15 per cent below 1942 supply.

#### 3. What is the commercial fertilizer situation?

Commercial fertilizers will be sufficient for our general requirements, insofar as phosphoric acid and potash are concerned, but nitrogen materials will be scarce. Well-rotted barnyard manure is one of the best sources of garden fertilizer.

Sludge from sewage disposal plants such as the Twin City plant is equal to manure in fertilizing value.

#### 4. Will garden tools be available?

When present supplies are exhausted, replacements cannot be made. Supplies are now very low. It was suggested that a program for cooperative use of tools be encouraged to help those who will be gardening for the first time in 1943, if they are not able to obtain sufficient tools.

#### 5. Should conservation of garden materials be specifically encouraged?

Many inexperienced persons will be gardening in 1943 for the first time. Many may have poor soil conditions, no understanding of gardening problems and no idea of needs for a family garden. Assistance should be planned to help such persons: (1) Make use of experienced gardeners. (2) Obtain information on amounts or quantities of seed necessary so no more will be purchased than needed. (3) Be guided in the purchase and use of proper insecticides with substitution of one insecticide for another in cases of shortage.

6. Should a garden seed list be publicized?

We recommend that one or more good lists be prepared and be publicized. Such lists should be composed of selected, recommended varieties, types and quantities from which selections may be made throughout the season.

7. Should special garden seed lists be prepared for city gardeners?

We suggest the preparation and release of garden combinations for the city gardener covering selection of varieties, sequence of plantings, and garden designs or maps especially for the inexperienced.

8. What information material is needed on the subjects of seed, fertilizers and other material for gardens?

We recommend: (1) Press articles covering seasonal and timely problems on these topics. (2) Same for radio. (3) Use of neighborhood leaders and Victory Aides. (4) We feel that the present information on gardening is adequate but needs to be made more adaptable by better interpretation and application. There is now a greater range of problems as a result of a wider developed garden program. (5) More specific information is needed for certain conditions and situations such as city gardens. These cover seeding recommendations and rates of planting, and cultural practices.