

MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY MUSEUM VICTORY GARDEN

Victory Gardens, sometimes called war gardens or food gardens for defense, first came about during World War I as a campaign to decrease pressure on the public food supply in March 1917. During World War II, the Victory Garden movement was emphasized to curb food shortages. Eleanor Roosevelt even planted a Victory Garden on the White House grounds.



Magazines such as the Saturday Evening Post and Life printed stories about victory gardens. Women's magazines gave instructions on how to grow and prepare garden produce. Families were encouraged to can their own vegetables to save commercial canned goods for the troops. In 1943, families bought 315,000 pressure cookers (used in the process of canning), compared to 66,000 in 1942. The government and businesses urged people to make gardening a family and community effort.

When World War II ended, so did the government's promotion of victory gardens. Many people did not plant a garden in the spring of 1946, but agriculture had not yet geared up to full production for grocery stores, so the country experienced some food shortages.

Any space, including backyards, apartment rooftops, vacant lots and public parks can be used to grow food. Our garden includes a variety of Specialty Crops that can be grown in Mississippi. The crops growing here will help you make the connection from soil and seed to your dinner plate.



SWEET POTATOES:

In 1915, a few families from Martin, Tennessee migrated to Vardaman, Mississippi. Their knowledge of the sweet potato and the unique geography, geology and climate of Calhoun County led to the production of some of the world's finest sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin B6. They are also low in sodium. It takes approximately 90 to 120 days to grow a number one size sweet potato.

MUSCADINES:



Muscadines are native to the southeastern United States. They are used for fruit, jellies, pies and juice. Muscadines have very few pests when compared to other crops. The muscadine is one of the most productive of all the berries. Some muscadines are female and some are self fertile. Muscadines are high in vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iron and low in sodium.



BLUEBERRIES:

Native Americans once called them "starberries" because the five points of blueberry blossoms make a star shape. Native Americans also used blueberries in non-traditional ways like making dye for textiles. During the Civil War of the 1860s, blueberries were collected, packaged, and sent to Union troops for food. Blueberries are an excellent way to eat healthy! Blueberries contain anthocyanin, which is good for eyesight. They contain more antioxidants than most other fruits or vegetables. Blueberries are also naturally low in both fat and sodium.



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