

UNITED STATES SCHOOL GARDEN ARMY

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NORTHEASTERN STATES

U · S · S · G

LEAFLET NINETY-THREE

BUREAU OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON

SCHOOL SUPERVISED GARDENING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

To make the Granite State a Garden State; to give to the young people of the new generations the sturdy qualities which were developed in those early years when New Hampshire boys and girls were reared on farms and went southward and westward to become leaders in new communities; to bring into the schools the vital interest found only in experience with realities—these are some of the aims of the educational leaders of New Hampshire who are putting across a program of school-supervised gardening which is intended to reach every child in the State.

The New Hampshire program of studies for elementary schools presents a consistent well-tried plan for gardening and elementary agriculture. It is the belief of the State authorities that gardening is as much a part of every school curriculum in city and country as is history or geography. "Garden plans, garden methods, and, more than all else, gardening as an outdoor activity, is, so far as pupils of school age are concerned, a school activity just as much as the plays and games of the school and as such must be in the hands of and directed by teachers and superintendents. Its planning is classroom work, its administration, like that of athletics, is a school affair and its final yearly round-up is a school planned and supervised exhibit at some convenient place."

The New Hampshire program in gardening is notable for three things—its insistence that gardening shall be taught to all children in the elementary schools, its recognition of the vital mutual relations between gardening in the elementary grades and agriculture in the high schools, and its appreciation of the opportunity offered through exhibits of products from school-supervised gardens to lead to a proper understanding of the importance of the work both by pupils and the tax-paying public.

The work in the grades is being carried on by the New Hampshire Division of the United States School Garden Army. This Division was originally organized as the New Hampshire Army of Junior Food Producers.

In a letter sent out to superintendents by the State Department in January, 1919, these statements were made:

Every boy and girl in our schools should become a member of this School Garden Army. There is no machinery or red tape connected with this organization. All of the pupils in the schoolroom are members just as soon as they have signed the enrollment blank and the class has selected a managing committee of three, to be designated as a captain and two lieutenants.

Each captain is an aid to the teacher in planning, planting, and supervising; each lieutenant is an aid to his or her captain and all—pupils, officer, teachers and superintendents—constitute the forces that are to help feed the world through the winter of 1919-20.

In New Hampshire this means 45 superintendents, 3,000 teachers, 3,000 captains, 6,000 lieutenants, and 50,000 pupils, all working on a definite plan as a part of their daily school work, and this plan a part of a great national movement capable of becoming an important factor in permanently restoring a safe balance between the *Producers* of food and the *Consumers* of food.

The results in the New Hampshire enrollment in the School Garden Army for 1919 show that practically every city and town in the State has one or more companies enlisted in the School Garden Army, the total number of pupils being nearly 40,000. Manchester leads off with about 3,500, closely followed by Concord with 3,000 and Portsmouth and Keene with about 1,200 each. Smaller cities, of course, have smaller numbers, but the significant thing is that nearly 150 towns and cities have definitely organized their children as units of this National School Army and that the teachers in all of these places are teaching definitely the garden lessons sent out from the Bureau of Education and the State Department of public instruction as a part of their regular school work. Among the other cities making a notably good showing mention should be made of Exeter, Laconia, Nashua, Claremont, Berlin, Franklin, Rochester, Derry, Somersworth, and Littleton. With relation to their size, however, many of the smaller places have done even better, proportionately. In this connection special credit should be given to Milford, Newport, Haverhill, Northwood, Pembroke, Petersboro, Pittsfield, Ashland, Bath, Bedford, Campton, Charlestown, Colebrook, Durham, Walpole, Winchester, Penacook, Farmington, Hampton, Hanover, and Lisbon.

The high schools in New Hampshire have been very successful in the adoption of the project method for courses of instruction in agriculture. The State authorities, however, have realized that while the project idea is well adapted to high-school conditions, it is not applicable to the lower schools, because of the larger

number of pupils and the different teaching conditions. They have adopted for these schools the slogan of the School Garden Army:

A garden for every child—
Every child in a garden.

They appreciate the fact that in order to accomplish this result, garden teaching must be given to all the children of all the people rather than to a few exceptionally fortunate ones who may happen to have larger opportunities than the others.

This program has involved a careful consideration of the home conditions of each pupil and in many cases the looking up of vacant lots, or the hiring of special fields in order to provide land for children who have none at home. But all of this, of course, has reacted in a desirable way both upon the schools and the communities and has served as a very desirable connection between the school and the home.

The New Hampshire idea of having the garden work for the season culminate in an exhibit of garden products is one of the best factors of the program of school supervised gardening. Such an exhibit carries the interest of the child throughout the season and enables the tax-paying public to get a comprehensive idea of the results which the schools are accomplishing. In most communities the exhibit proves a surprise to many people who do not realize what is being done by the pupils.

In each of these exhibits provision is made for a large number of inexpensive prizes, very often simply a ribbon or a card of honorable mention. In distributing such prizes it is best to give them to a large number of children and thus avoid the feeling of disappointment and discouragement which so often holds over when only a few prizes are given for garden results.

