

MORE GARDENS

**Success of Victory Gardening at Clubs
Last Year Is Basis of 1944 Expansion.**

By JOE GRAFFIS

★ ONE VICTORY that golf has helped to win over the Japs is that on the garden front. It was thought that Jap garden labor shortage in western agricultural districts would seriously diminish the supply of vegetables on the American table. While this shortage did have an adverse effect on big commercial marketing operations the American citizen, by again getting hands in the soil and larding their lean earth with sweat, managed last year to keep the belly adequately packed with vegetables.

Estimates on 1943 figure that as high as 42% of the home-consumed vegetables were raised in Victory gardens. This year the percentage is expected to run even higher due to farm labor shortage, necessity of shipping commercial packs of vegetables to allies in the burned earth districts to keep them in the fight, and surprisingly enough, because many Americans have found that Victory gardening gives them a satisfying feeling of independence and good physical and mental conditioning.

Golf clubs, especially in metropolitan districts, didn't expect nearly the Victory garden interest and participation that was in evidence last year. The golf club members were supposed to be too pressed for time, too lazy and too ignorant of gardening work, to go for Victory gardening at the clubs.

What a bum guess that was!

The majority of clubs reported that Victory garden operations were the most successful wartime innovations on the club programs. The gardens meant added work for greenkeepers, already over-burdened, but reports from greenkeepers plainly show that the additional work was well worth the effort.

Letters to GOLFDOM disclose that greenkeepers were more than satisfied by the results in attaching themselves very closely and valuably to war effort, educating members who picked up the fundamentals of gardening remarkably quick and who kept faithful to garden demands throughout the growing season, and in establishing members' acquaintance with greenkeepers and high regard for the greenkeeper's capabilities and personality.

The golf club Victory gardener got a considerable edge over the average Victory gardener in site selection of the garden, proper soil preparation, watering,

availability of equipment, expert advice and protection of his or her plot against pests, depredation and theft. Clubs charged a small fee for each garden plot, based on pro-rating soil preparation, watering and other necessary expense items.

An unexpected result of the Victory garden activities at golf clubs was to revive women's daytime attendance at the clubs. Club officials had no idea that women would go in for Victory gardening as enthusiastically and faithfully as they did, due to the many other war effort interests of women.

Another unexpected crop of the Victory garden work at clubs was to bring out businessmen who combined a workout in the garden with a round of golf, or a golf lesson. The problem of many businessmen who need golf the most in wartime is the problem of getting them out to the club after they feel so mentally exhausted from work at their offices or plants they believe they'll be doing the limit if they are able to drag themselves home and grouch around.

What pleasantly surprised many Victory gardeners at clubs was the amount of garden produce that could be raised on comparatively small plots. Although the gardening wasn't easy work for people who had been leading sedentary lives the crop showed big returns for effort that became less arduous as the season and crops progressed.

The competitive element was present at almost every club Victory garden and prize exhibits of garden produce were exhibited in clubhouses, sometimes in deep seriousness and other times in jest, displaying the prize exhibit in a trophy case alongside the producer's golf scorecard with some waggish comment.

The clubs' own interest in Victory gardening for its restaurant was an important element last year, not only in keeping money and coupon expenditures down and in assuring a supply of strictly fresh vegetables.

State Councils of Defense, state agricultural schools and extension services generally have a good supply of free material available for clubs to use in mailing to members in getting 1944 Victory garden operations under way. The National Victory Garden Institute, 598 Madison ave., New York, N. Y., also has considerable printed material for those interested.