



History of Community Gardening

From the late 1800's through the 1940's, the main purpose of community gardens in the U.S. was to grow food.

LATE 1800's POTATO PATCH MOVEMENT

Cities were growing rapidly. Many people were out of work. Across the country, cities began offering garden plots to poor people so they could grow their own food.



EARLY 1900's LIBERTY GARDENS

The U.S. government recruited people to grow Liberty Gardens during World War I. Growing your own food was a way that every American could contribute to the war effort.



1930's RELIEF GARDENS

The Great Depression began. Relief gardens were promoted to improve people's spirits, and to provide food and work.



1940's VICTORY GARDENS

When the U.S. entered World War II, the government launched a Victory Garden campaign. By 1944, 20 million Victory Gardens produced 44% of the fresh vegetables in the U.S.!



Many vegetables were stored for winter.

From the late 1960's to the present day, community gardens have served many different purposes.

IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOODS

People in cities turn vacant lots into beautiful gardens. Gardens provide a quiet place to sit in the shade, or to meet and talk with friends. Children play in gardens and older people get exercise while gardening.



GROWING FOOD

Many people grow their own food because they like the taste of fresh vegetables. Others are concerned about rising food prices or about chemicals in foods. Some simply want to teach their children where their food comes from.

EXPRESSING CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Many immigrants and Americans from all ethnic backgrounds bring plants and cultural traditions to the gardens, creating multi-cultural garden mosaics.



a casita in a Puerto Rican community garden

