

## Central Sierra Victory Gardens 2020 By Maggie Murphy

Did you know that Victory Gardens originated during World War I as “War Gardens for Victory”? They were first developed in the United States in March 1917 before we entered the war. The National War Garden Commission was formed and the war garden campaign launched with slogans like “Dig for Victory.” The altruistic purpose was to alleviate the severe food shortage experienced by our starving allies in Europe. Americans were encouraged to grow their own fruits and vegetables so that more food could be exported. School grounds, parks, backyards and vacant lots all became gardens.



With World War II, Victory Gardens reemerged. Around one third of the vegetables produced in the U.S. came from victory gardens. It was emphasized that the produce from gardens would help lower the price of vegetables needed to feed the troops. Commercial crops could be diverted to the military, and transportation resources could be redirected from food towards moving troops and supplies if you would grow your own. Food rationing brought in the additional aspect of gardening as food security. Victory gardens were also considered a morale booster. In a time of great stress, everyone could do something productive to contribute to success.

Victory Gardens are making a comeback. Across the news networks, gardening sites and university extensions we are hearing of Victory Gardens 2020. Our own University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Calaveras and Tuolumne counties joined together to create a Facebook community group. It recently expanded to include Amador and El Dorado counties and is now **Central Sierra Victory Gardens 2020**.

Stay close to home, be outdoors, get some sun and exercise and be productive – grow something edible. De-stress with other local gardeners by connecting through social media and sharing your progress, questions, trials and successes. Other gardeners grasp the joy in watching your seedlings grow or the horror the sight of a gopher generates. In the spirit of Victory Gardens, the focus of the group is on veggie, fruit and herb gardening.

Join us on Facebook at this link or, when on Facebook, search for Central Sierra Victory Gardens 2020.

*Maggie Murphy is a University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Calaveras County.*

*UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties can answer home gardening questions. Call 209-533-5912 or go to: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=7269> to fill out our easy-to-use problem questionnaire. Check out our website at: [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master\\_Gardeners/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/) You can also find us on Facebook.*