

Victory Gardens Vol 1

PROVIDED FREE, BY THE SMRC
COMMITTEE

AGRIHOOD



2022 VICTORY GARDENS

During WWI and II, growing labor and transportation shortages, made it hard to harvest and move fruits and vegetables to the stores. The US government created a program to counteract this lack of food, turning to its citizens, encouraging them to plant a "Victory Garden" as part of the war effort to fill in any insecurities in the food system, and have everyone who could, grow their own fruits and vegetables. Americans answered the call, planted gardens in backyards, empty lots and even city rooftops. Neighbors pooled their resources, planted different kinds of foods and formed cooperatives, all in the name of patriotism.

Today

Now, in 2022 we are facing similar circumstances, and Victory Gardens are making a come back. Consider this your official 'Call to action!' Help yourself and your family, grow a VICTORY GARDEN, join our committee!

We are proactively pooling together our collective knowledge and creating hands-on help to any of gardeners who intend to use their space to create their own Victory Garden.

This time around, it is not just patriotism, it is food security and self sufficiency!

**Volume 1 was created by the Agrihood, a committee of the SMRC. This is the 1st pamphlet, made for and by the residents of San Manuel, in our new volumes on the "how to's" & practical steps for a successful Victory Garden. Below will give you the 1st steps to Victory!
JOIN THE AGRIFOOD TODAY 520-971-6760**

Fall is HERE!

Right now there are four (4) good ideas to consider before starting sprouting indoors for the Fall and Winter growing seasons

1. Pick a spot to grow.
2. Decide whether to plant in containers, raised beds, or direct sow.
3. Start a Compost pile, email SanManuelRC@gmail.com for more info!
4. Pick the seeds that your group will enjoy, make sure the seeds grow best for the season! Seed suggestions for our Arizona desert below...

Now is the time to prepare for *cool-season* growing.

For beginners: sprout and grow an easy plant, like sunflowers, there's no need to have a huge tilled area if you're just curious. Sunflowers are the easiest to grow, and they will help you understand how easy it is to sprout and can help light your excitement to Victory Gardening!

7 Principals for a successful Victory Garden in Arizona

1. CHOOSING THE BEST LOCATION FOR YOUR GARDEN

Vegetable gardens need at least 6 hours of sun to grow and thrive. We have an abundance of sun, but the type of sunlight we get varies.

Morning sun is ideal for a vegetable garden; its rays are strong and cool. The harsh afternoon sun is harder on gardens in the summer. Take a look around your yard at sunrise and notice where morning light first hits your garden, and then if you can, plant there! If your garden area gets afternoon sun, you will probably need to provide some shade for certain plants during the summer. Check sun exposure using Sun Seeker app (or similar). Allows you to see amount of sunlight each area receives. There should also be a water source nearby or within a hose distance.

2. USE THE BEST TYPE OF SOIL FOR VEGETABLES IN ARIZONA

It is possible to grow vegetables in the native soil; however, most native soil is best adapted to growing native plants, not garden vegetables.

Because Arizona's growing seasons are shorter, we ask a lot of the vegetables we grow – they need to sprout, grow, and produce during a short amount of time.

For the best chance of success, it's important to give plants what they need to thrive in desert conditions. A combination of compost, coconut coir or peat moss, and vermiculite added to raised beds is a simple and effective way to begin gardening right away. Arizona Worm Farm sells a raised bed mixture with these ingredients designed to work well here in the desert. You can go even more local and check the "NEXTDOOR" app for local worm castings.

COMPOST..

Continue adding compost and organic matter each season and the soil in your raised beds will improve each year.

A **soil test** can determine the health of your soil. A soil test maybe necessary for your land, everyone's soil is different. The easiest solution: **Above ground beds!** You control the soil that goes in and out of the container.

One of my go-to inspirational's is an Australian gardener who runs the "Self Sufficient Me" YouTube channel, his climate is very similar to our high desert, and he has a great attitude!

3. PLANT AT THE RIGHT TIME IN ARIZONA

Gardening in Arizona is different, not impossible. We have different seasons than most. Zone maps on the back of seed packets and other zone maps don't usually work here. Instead of one long growing season, we have 3 shorter planting seasons:

Cool-season crops grow from around September to March;

Warm-season crops grow from about February through May; and

Monsoon- Monsoon planting begins with the increased rain and humidity of July or August.

4. SELECT THE APPROPRIATE VARIETIES OF VEGETABLES WHEN GARDENING IN OUR HIGH DESERT

Choose short-season crops. When you have a choice between two crops and one has shorter “days to harvest”, go with the one that is shorter. The high desert of Arizona has 2-3 growing seasons, but the seasons are shorter and crops have less time to produce. Smaller varieties of tomatoes and melons often outperform their larger counterparts.

Choose plants adapted to our growing conditions in Arizona. "Native Seeds Search" offers arid-adapted seed varieties that tolerate the heat and drought of an Arizona summer better than varieties better suited to other regions. Check out the Chimayo melons and Hopi yellow watermelons from "Native Seeds Search"

5. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MICROCLIMATES IN YOUR YARD

Some parts of the yard will be warmer or cooler than others. Use those areas to your advantage by growing plants whose requirements match up to the specific microclimate available.

Notice in your yard which areas receive the most sun and shade during different seasons of the year. Learn the sun requirements and heat tolerance of different plants. Consider adding shade parts of the garden that need it during the hottest times of the year. Take advantage of the shade provided by larger plants to interplant different crops.

6. WATER YOUR VICTORY GARDEN CORRECTLY

Vegetables and fruits do not produce well if they are stressed. Problems in the garden can often be traced back to watering – not enough, too much, or inconsistent water, plants become stressed and are more prone to diseases and insects.

Spend time in your garden each day. You will notice the watering needs of your plants and be alerted to issues with your watering system. Pay attention to the weather – Plants require more water when it is dry, windy, and in the summer heat. During the summer in hot areas like Arizona, raised-bed gardens often need watering every day. Other times of the year, the raised beds may only need to be watered 1-2 times per week. Adjust the frequency of the timer for seasonal conditions.

Water deep enough to moisten the plant's entire root system each time you water. Adjust the frequency of watering, not the duration of watering. Water in the morning. WILTED leaves at midday DOESN'T necessarily mean a plant needs water; always test soil a couple of inches deep to see if soil is dry before giving droopy plants more water. They will probably recover once the sun goes down. Water the soil – not the leaves of plants. This saves water as well as prevents many plant diseases.

7. Mulch garden each season (especially in the summer)

Add a 3-inch layer of organic mulch on top of the soil around your vegetables. Mulching helps an Arizona vegetable garden in several ways:

Mulching helps prevent weeds which can harbor pests and diseases, and compete for limited resources of nutrients, light, and water. A thick layer of mulch helps protect roots from extremes in temperatures. Mulching helps preserve moisture.

High pH Crops

Arizona soil is high pH, so if you are creating a **Victory Garden**, it's a good idea to choose **crops that tolerate the higher ranges of pH.**

After a bit of research, here they are:

Beans (6-7.5) **Beets** (6-7.5)

Broccoli (6.7-7.2) **Celery** (5.5-7.5)

Leeks (6-7.5) **Okra** (6.5-7.5)

Onions (6-7.5) **Orach** (7.3-8)

Spinach, Malibar (6-7.5) –One of my favorite

Spinach, New Zealand (6.5-7.5) **Sunflower** (6)

Those are the highest, but there a bunch of other popular crops that go almost as high:

Amaranth (6.0-7.0) **Carrots** (5.5-6.8)

Cauliflower (6.0-7.0) **Garlic** (6.0-7.0)

Lettuce (6.0-6.8) **Melon** (6-7)

Peas (6.0-7.0) **Pepper** (6-7)

Pumpkin (6.0-7.0) **Radish** (5.5-6.8)

Spinach (6.0-7.0) **Soybean** (6-7)

Tomato (6.0-7.0) **Turnip** (5.5-6.8)

By the way, high pH (called alkaline) is problematic because it makes iron and phosphorus unavailable to your plants. To lower your pH, add sulfur. Peat moss is also a common acidifying addition.

TUNE IN NEXT TIME FOR AN ENTIRE EPISODE ON
COMPOST!

In the pamphlets that follow, we will be providing more, detailed tips and tricks, advanced growing techniques, water systems, worms, rain water harvesting and anything you bring to our group that is helpful!

Join us in our monthly meetings of the Food Committee, where we are planning our community garden, which will be grown on the donated land provided to the Non-Profit. We will also be seeking grants and donations to get us off the ground and all the visions the group has to promote food security for everyone who helps out.

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SCAN HERE!