

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOMEMAkers' CHAT

Monday, January 16, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "PLANNING THE 1939 FOOD GARDEN." Information from Extension Service and Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

January is the month for planning the food garden on paper, to be ready to plant as soon as frost is out of the ground. In the deep South year around gardens are possible. But even in those states January is as good a month as any to plan the succession of crops for use both fresh and canned or stored. It's the start of a new year's financial budget. Why not plan the year's food too? After all, food represents the largest single item in total living expenditures.

Farm families have quite an edge on city folks when it comes to having an adequate and satisfactory food supply on limited income. Farm families can raise enough of the protective foods, to have good diets. At least, they can if they plan their gardens well. Having a food garden is a sure means of raising the family standard of living without increasing cash expense much. Of course some seeds may be bought, but in general, growing the protective foods instead of having to buy them releases cash for things that can't be produced at home.

So much for the reasons why a food garden is important. Next comes the question of what should be planted. First, the family might discuss which foods they produced and used in abundance last year, and which were not grown in sufficient amount. Next, the family might find out whether the state extension service has worked out a garden plan suited to its own climate and growing conditions. Such a plan would undoubtedly take into consideration the recommendations of the nutritionists for 2 vegetables a day besides potatoes, and 2 fruits - - - emphasizing the green or leafy and yellow vegetables 3 to 5 times a week and tomatoes 4 times a week.

The garden plan would provide not only for fruits and vegetables eaten fresh but for those to be canned, brined, pickled, or stored. In many states, the nutrition specialist at the College of Agriculture have prepared tables showing exactly how many rows or feet of each vegetable should be set out to yield an amount of that product that will accord with dietary requirements for families of different size and make-up. The needs of a family with children might be a little different from those for a family composed entirely of adults.

There are several questions to be settled within the family, whatever plan for planting is decided upon. For example -- maybe it wouldn't pay to devote too much space to certain crops if they are very cheap locally. Or, it might be that the space could better be given to some other crops of great protective value which cost a good deal if bought. Again, the varieties that grow well locally and that are popular with the family will naturally be chosen. Another thing: what part will each member of the family take in making and carrying out the garden plan? The parents cannot be expected to do all the needed work. The children may even take over the entire food garden as a 4-H club project or a matter of interested cooperation.

1/16/39

Here's a question many farm families are linking with the food garden plan -- the question of using freezer-locker service where it is available. Perhaps the use of freezer-lockers would insure a better all-year diet for the family, or save on store bills, or eliminate some of the canning work; or there may be disadvantages for some families, such as the distance to the nearest cold-storage plant, that offset any advantages in this method of storing foods for out-of-season use. If freezer-lockers are to be used, that fact may influence the choice of one vegetable or another for growing, since some store better than others under freezing temperatures.

The vegetable garden does not take care of all the family's food needs. Fruit trees and vines enter the picture of protective foods, also poultry for eggs and meat, meat animals, and a cow or goat for milk. But a half-acre plot, properly planned and managed, will provide fresh vegetables through the growing season for a family of five, and a surplus for canning, and storing.

To provide fruit for a family of this size some of the State Extension Service recommend a half-acre orchard. The commonly grown tree fruits are apples, peaches, cherries, plums and pears. These are often supplemented by some vine, bush, and other fruits Such as raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, muskmelons, watermelons, or grapes.

The amount of each kind of vegetable and fruit your particular family will need to plant depends on several things: First, on the number and ages of the persons in the home. That determines the number of pounds per week and per year required for an adequate diet. The distribution of these pounds among the different vegetables is a matter of what grows locally and what the family likes.

Second, the length of the growing season affects the amount that will be eaten fresh and the amount to be canned or stored.

And, third, the always total amount of vegetables and fruits required should take into account the recommendations of the nutrition specialists. I'll repeat those recommendations that I mentioned before. For each person, every day, 2 servings of vegetables besides potatoes, and 2 fruits; or one fruit and tomatoes.

So, each of you will work out your own garden plan with the help of any information you can get from the state extension service or your county extension agent. And here's a thought: planning the garden makes an interesting problem in arithmetic for the older children. Maybe if they work at it for a while they will develop a real enthusiasm for helping to make a success of the food garden! --- even down to the weeding!

