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MEMMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

September 13, 1944

SUBJECT: MUNITIONS FOR '45 V-GARDENS.

Information from garden specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Here's an idea from the Victory Garden Chairman of the United States Department of Agriculture for those patriotic and thrifty members who are determined to plant and tend that precious garden spot even more wisely next year. He believes he learned some of his best gardening lore by mulling over his experiences. He attends the School of Experience and really studies his lessons. He recommends that you do some thinking now, before you forget the details, about your part in the battle with the bugs.

Who got the vegetables, you or the bugs? If the bugs had too large a share, about a bit of detective work to find the reason? How about the insecticides stocked up on when you were embarking on the garden business? Did you have just what you needed in sufficient quantity when the various bugs threatened the crop? Were you overstocked on the materials to combat one kind of bug and forgot all about the others?

What insects gave you trouble this year? About when did you first see them in your garden? What vegetables did they attack? Was the weather unusually dry or wet, cool or hot, when they appeared in numbers? These are items of importance in your garden diary. They will help you recognize the situations in which you might expect bug troubles to be coming on, next year. For example, the item about weather. Hot, dry weather is hard on most vegetables; and bugs make it even harder for the plant to grow. Warm, moist weather is good growing weather for many vegetables, but it is also apt to increase fungus diseases and some kinds of insects. Cool, moist weather brings its peculiar afflictions to the garden. It is worth while to put your

observations down day-by-day, but if you didn't keep a diary, perhaps you can recall enough of your experiences to jot down something on these points. They would give you a base for checking to determine which loss, if any, you could probably have prevented. And your dependable instruction book, or your garden leader, could tell you how.

Of course, you're not one of those Victory gardeners who had a touch of the put-it-off ailment. But there might have been a few, - a very few, - gardeners who had the instruction book at the beginning of the season and then put off the purchase of dusts and sprays, or just didn't get around to putting them on. Says one of these put-it-off gardeners: "I knew I might expect bean beetles. I had bought the recommended dust to protect my vines and I had been told I should put it on before the beetles came. But my bean vines kept looking so green and thrifty - no signs of any trouble - so I just put off dusting, - had plenty of other chores. One day I looked over at the bean vines and I'm telling you it didn't take an experienced eye to see the beetles had been there and had practically finished a good third of the leaves. Of course I got busy then with the duster. But I would have had much less trouble with bean beetles and a much better crop of snap beans if I had done what I knew I ought to do -- start dusting when the beetles first came." And that, Victory gardeners, is a good motto for your garden notebook. Let's put it down in big black letters -- "Start dusting when the first beetle comes."

A resolution to keep the dust and spray equipment in good condition would be another good line for next year's garden notebook. This equipment is important to the protection of your garden. It is made of scarce materials. But, most important to you, it should work when you need it. The Victory Gardeners Handbook on insects and diseases has a word of admonition that every club member could read again with profit. It says: "Regardless of the care and skill shown in the selection of a garden site, in the cultivation and fertilization of the soil, and in the selection

and planting of seeds or transplants, all such efforts involving the use of critical and scarce supplies of seeds, fertilizers, and tools, may be partially or completely nullified by insects and diseases unless steps are taken to control them."

This year's experiences in controlling insects and diseases can help us plan our program for protecting our garden crops next year.

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