



- **Women, Food
Security &
Community**

History – Heritage - Hope

Dr. Rose Hayden-Smith · May 2026

Today's Agenda

- 01 Current Context
- 02 Our Past Can Inform Our Present
- 03 Inspiring Case Studies
- 04 Call to Action
- 05 Conclusion

food

- 1- buy it with thought
 - 2- cook it with care
 - 3- use less wheat & meat
 - 4- buy local foods
 - 5- serve just enough
 - 6- use what is left
-

don't waste it

U.S. FOOD ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 01

Current Context





“We have yet to understand: that if I am starving you are in danger.”

– James Baldwin

Key Statistics

28%

Of the world's population

Experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, per a 2025 United Nations' report

673M

Of the world's population

Experiences chronic hunger.
Children are inordinately impacted.

80M

More women than men struggle to access adequate food

There is a gender in access to food.



Food Insecurity Drivers

- 01 Intense conflicts & displacement
- 02 Climate shocks
- 03 Declining humanitarian aid
- 04 Economic pressures, inflation, income inequality -> political instability
- 05 Policy changes & data suppression

OURS...to fight for



FREEDOM FROM WANT



“A hungry
man is not a
free man.”

– Adlai

Stevenson

SECTION 02

Our Past Can Inform Our Present

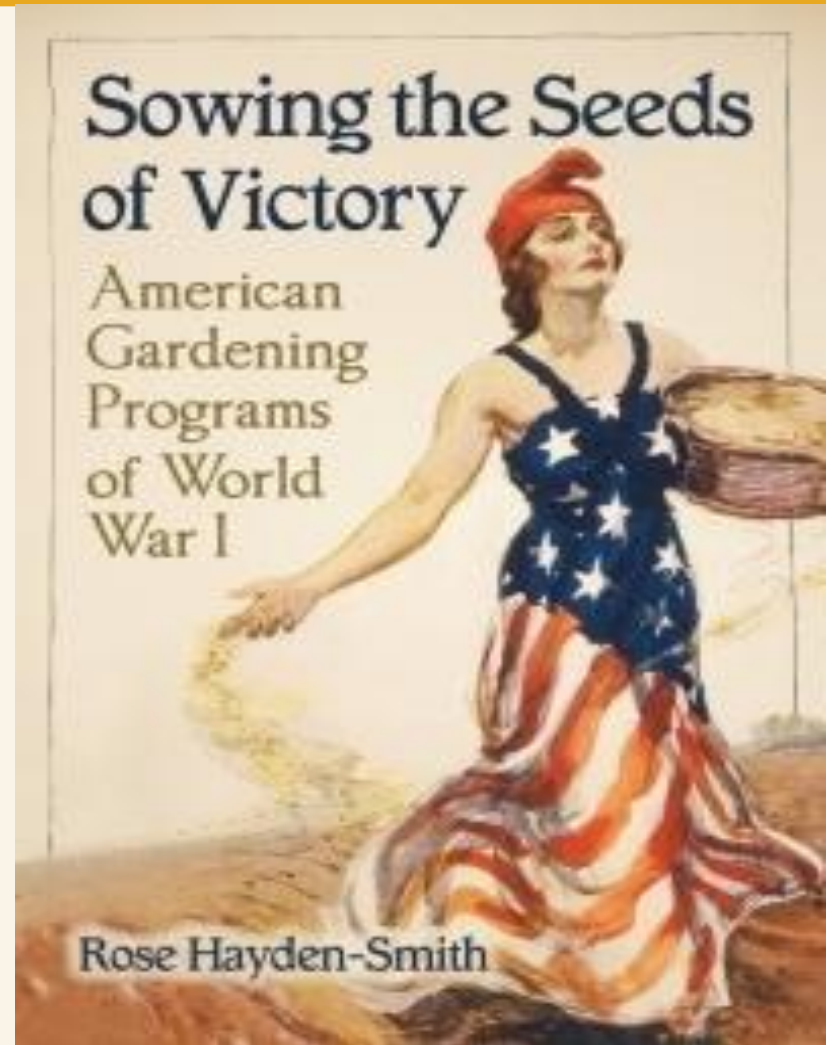




History rhymes and repeats. Gardens endure. Across oceans and generations, the same themes echo, a call and response between women and creation.

Context: Poster Art

- La Belle Epoque & Art Nouveau
- Chromolithography
- Modern advertising industry
- Shift to consumer society
- Pervasive in communities across the globe – the era's social media
- Around WWI, governments formed public agencies to influence public opinion & manage information
- During wartime, artists donated their services



Some Garden History: Many Movements



Kitchen Gardens

Central to women's work across the globe

Women as Drivers

Home gardens, farms, landscape art, reform, school gardens, garden clubs, civic organizations, businesses. Domestic sphere.

Increased Interest in Horticultural Education

Land-grants (in US), women's hort schools, farm schools, school gardens, international exchange of all sorts.

Panic of 1893

Global economic downturn. It catalyzed urban & relief gardens, pushing garden work more strongly into areas of social reform.

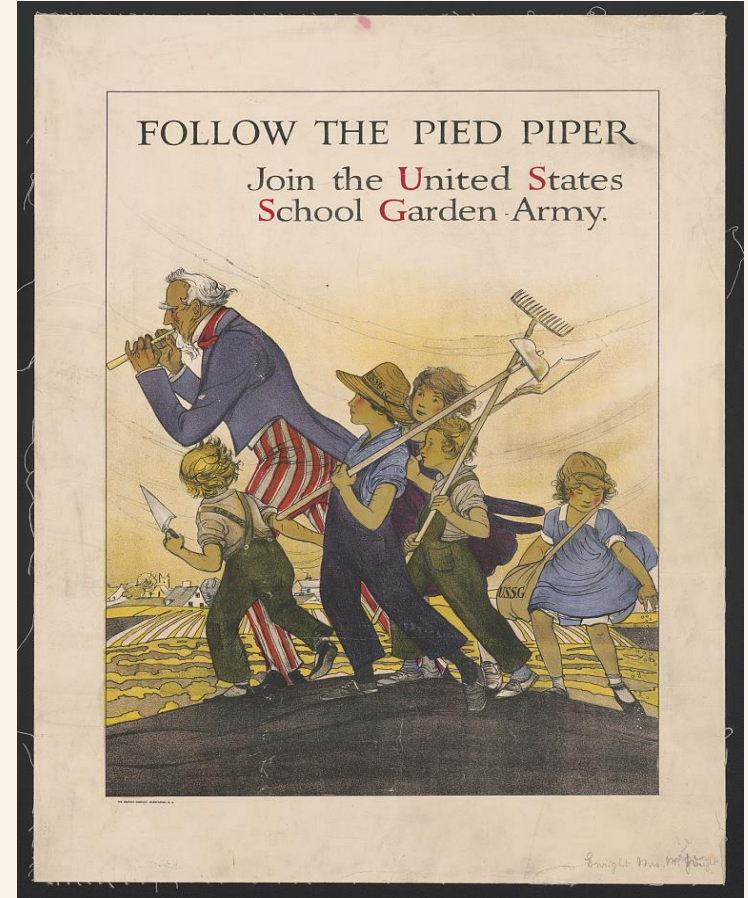
A Critical Moment Here

- The persistence of gardening and cultural foodways during a period of agricultural collectivization
- Women were central to that work
- Women were critical to retaining skills and memory
- As in other times and places, there was an institutional narrative (memory) that was not the cultural memory carried by the people



Garden Movement Influences

- City Beautiful movement
- Rural-Urban disconnect/synthesis
- Economic and social crises
- Immigrant & social movements
- Professionalization of science
- Scientific agriculture
- Growth of public education & universities
- Suffrage movement
- Desire to link consumption to production
- Back-to nature and land movement
- Expositions & cultural exchange



SECTION 03

Inspiring Case Studies



WW1 & WW2 Victory Gardens



- School, home, community & workplace gardens
- Food production, conservation, preservation
- Collective (& coercive)
- Pluralistic messaging
- Militarized rhetoric
- Multi-purposed – many goals!
- Government/Private Interests/Public Effort

Food Security = National Security



Women Central to the Programs

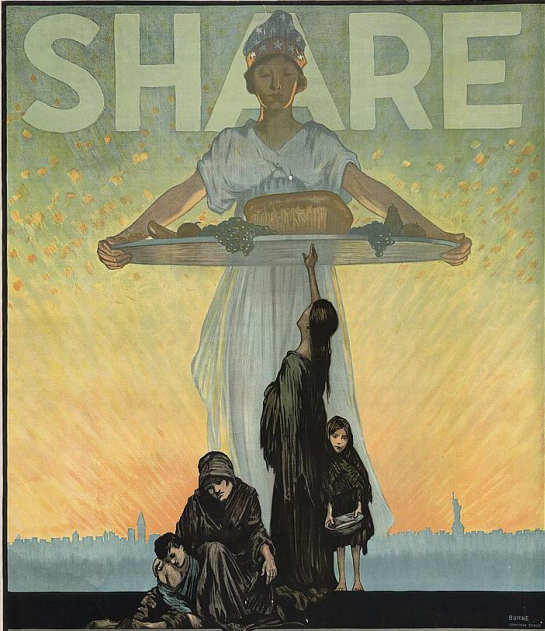


Call to a Greater Good



שפייו וועט געווינען דיא קריעג!
איהר קומט אהער צו געפינען פרייהייט.
יעצט מוזט איהר העלפען זיא צו בעשיצען
מיר מוזען דיא עלליים פערזארגען מיט ווייג.
לאזט קיין זאך ניט גיין אין ניוועק

יונייטעד סטייטס שפייו פערזאאלמנט.



SHARE

Jewish Relief Campaign



This is
what GOD gives us
What are you giving
so that others may
live?
Eat less
WHEAT
MEAT
FATS
SUGAR
Send more to Europe
or they will Starve

UNITED STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION

WW1 & WW2 Victory Gardens Worked



- Increased exports
- 1917: 3.5M gardens
- 1918: 5.2M gardens
- School gardens exploded
- Woman's Land Army mobilization reached non-rural women
- 1944: 20M producing gardens
- Gardens in public spaces

Contemporary: CSA Model

- Founded 1960s-1970s
- Japan, Europe, US
- Driven by concerns about chemicals, loss of farms, desire to connect to farmers (partnership, give a face to farmers)
- Partnership between farmer and consumer



Contemporary: La Via Campesina

- Founded 1993
- International - 81 countries
- Many stakeholders
- Food sovereignty
- Emphasizes agroecological methods
- UN Declaration on Rights of Peasants & Other People Working in Rural Areas



Contemporary: Edible Schoolyard



- Alice Waters (chef, activist, Montessori-trained teacher)
- School and Victory Garden models influenced her vision
- Saw “deskilling” as a political problem – experiential learning became cornerstone
- 1995 – MLK School in Berkeley
- 2023 – 6200+ kitchen/garden programs in global network

Contemporary: D-Town Farm



- Detroit Black Community Food Security Network - 2008
- Assures Detroit's Black population plays a significant role in the local food movement
- Urban ag policy model – farmers marketing, ag education, more
- Collective effort – women key to founding

Contemporary: White House Garden & USDA People's Garden



- White House 2008 – first vegetable garden since WWII
- Demonstrates the transformational nature of gardens in public spaces
- USDA People's Garden 2009 – On the national mall, organic, also an initiative

SECTION 04

Call to Action



Five Things We Can Do

- 01 Know Our Soil
- 02 Build a Network of Gardens in Every Community. (A garden for everyone. Everyone in a garden).
- 03 Women have economic power. Use it to build & sustain local and regional food systems/enterprises.
- 04 Cross-Cultural Knowledge Exchange: Mutual Understanding & Support
- 05 Document and Uplift the Work of Women



SECTION 05

Conclusion



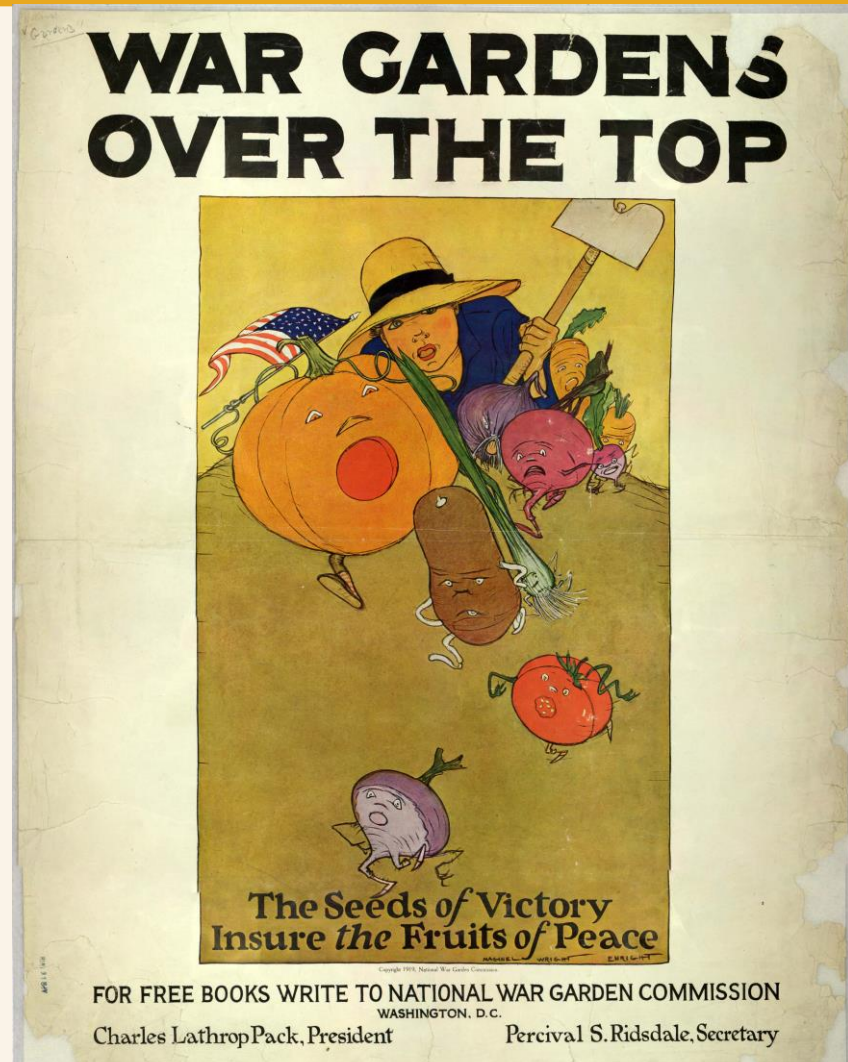
The desire to go home that is a desire to be whole, to know where you are, to be the point of intersection of all the lines drawn through all the stars, to be the constellation-maker and the center of the world, that center called love. To awaken from sleep, to rest from awakening, to tame the animal, to let the soul go wild, to shelter in darkness and blaze with light, to cease to speak and be perfectly understood.”

— Rebecca Solnit, *Storming the Gates of Paradise: Landscapes for Politics*



Image Credits

- U.S. Library of Congress
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- The Museum of Ventura County
- Personal Collection



Statistics/Resources

- United Nations FAO
- UNICEF
- World Food Programme
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Remembering Soviet Food Culture: Experiences of a Memory Community in Estonia (Ester Bardone & Anu Kannike)



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יוניטעד סטייטס שפייו פערזארגען.
1941

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Thank You

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