

VEGETABLES

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Health Department)

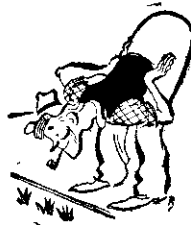
THIS is the time for garden thrills—the innocent thrills that arise from going out one morning on a tour of inspection to find that the carrots, or the lettuce, or the parsnips are up! Later there will be the thrill of digging up the biggest potatoes or the heaviest parsnips or pulling the longest beans in the district! Fish stories pale into insignificance when compared with the accomplishments of a gardener who has "circumvented" the white butterfly or the sparrows. I can imagine their triumphs or their sorrows in England just now, with the battle raging between the "Dig For Victory" allotment holder and the wireworm that infests the carrots there. It does not need a world war to remind us of the value of vegetables, though the last war as well as this one has given a great stimulus to vegetable gardening. And there is more value to be obtained than the material value from gardening—for there is the contentment of mind and the removal of irritations that comes from delving in the soil. But it is particularly the material value to which I should confine myself.

They're Best When Fresh

Vegetables and fruits are expensive items in the urban dietary, accounting if taken in adequate quantities for something like a quarter or a fifth of the total food costs. Not only is it their monetary value, however, but the extra nutritional value of vegetables gathered fresh from your own garden that prompts this article. There are many merits in green vegetables; two of them (the taste and the vitamin C content) begin to decline from the time that they are picked. Thus if you want to cut down on costs of citrus fruits, it pays you to have your vegetables grown in your own garden and picked just before they are used.

In planning maximum benefit from your garden, there should be an attempt to have greens coming on all the year round. This is not so difficult to manage in summer, but in winter, when fruit is scarce, it becomes more important to have the garden supplying the table with greens.

In your enthusiasm for your summer crops, remember that it will pay you to start now with your winter vegetables—cabbage, kale, leeks, silverbeet, spinach, endive, brussels sprouts (particularly rich in vitamin C), swedes, carrots. Remember also that, much as you delight in your Saturday afternoon bonfire, justifying your fun by thinking of the wood ashes that it will yield, the minerals will still be there if it becomes humus instead—and there will be in addition all of the fibre and of the nitrogenous materials and of the other attributes of compost which add tilth to the soil.



And do not forget the cress, the mustard or the herbs that add to the richness of salads, parsley, sage, thyme, chives, mint, marjoram, aniseed, basil, tansy, and many others with which we have too often, no more than a literary acquaintance.

(Next week: "Father! Is Your School Child Healthy and Well-Nourished?" by Dr. H. B. Turbott.)

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