FERTILIZING VICTORY GARDENS

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The campaign for Victory Gardens has raised a flood of questions on soil analysis and fertilizers for the gardens.

Soil Analysis Necessary?
The question, "Do I need to have my soil analyzed?" can be answered "No" in most cases. If the garden land has grown good vegetation, grass, weeds, or crop, an analysis will seldom help. About the only places the analysis will be helpful is on the unusual cases of high salts or white alkali, high pH, or very alkaline or low pH, or acid soils. Poor plant growth in the garden is often caused by the wrong cultural practices, and by plant diseases or insects.

How Much Fertilizer?
The soil should be carefully plowed or spaded. Sandy soils can be worked almost any time. Tight or heavy soils should be worked when moist but not wet. If farm manure is available, it should be worked well into the soil in amounts up to about a bushel per 25 square feet.

What kind?
Demands for manure are so great that a choice is not always possible. When more than one kind is available, care in the choice and use of manure is worth the effort. Well-rotted manure is best. Fresh manure should not be applied so heavily as well-rotted manure. Strawy manure is less satisfactory. It should be cut so that the straw is in small pieces. If other manure is available, strawy manure should be avoided. Sheep manure is good, but it is concentrated and can be applied more thinly. Chicken manure is very concentrated and must be applied sparingly or it may cause "burning". The rate of application of chicken manure may be about half that recommended above or one-half pound per square foot or a bushel per 50 square feet. In all cases, the manure should be well worked into the soil.

Commercial Fertilizer?
If manure cannot be obtained, Victory Garden fertilizer (3-8-7) may be used at the rate of 1 pound per 25 feet of row or broadcast and worked well into the soil at the rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet.

Row Application
When fertilizer is applied by the row method, it should be put in bands near the row but at one side, preferably each side. The fertilizer should be mixed thoroughly with the soil and covered at least 2 inches; 4 inches would be better. If the vegetable rows are as close as 12 inches, one-half pound for each 25 feet of row will be enough. In no case should the fertilizer be mixed with the seed.
Broadcasting the fertilizer is easier, but it takes a little more fertilizer to get the same results.

If Garden is Already Planted?

If the garden has already been planted, Victory Garden fertilizer may be applied in bands next to the row. In making this application, furrows should be made at the side of the row and fertilizer mixed with soil applied in the bottom of the furrow at the rate of 1 pound to each 25 feet of row.