THE flavor and tenderness of many vegetables depend in a large measure on their being harvested at the proper time. The picking of string-beans should be early, constant, and methodical, partly because old beans are stringy and unpalatable and partly because, if picking is neglected and the plants allowed to form seed, production ceases. Peas should always be picked just as soon as the pods are well filled, before the seeds commence to harden. Their flavor deteriorates if they are picked more than an hour or two before they are needed for the table. The same remarks apply to sweet corn. There is an old saying that "the pot should be boiling before the ears are picked from the plant."

Great care should be taken in harvesting beets. If the roots are bruised or broken, or if the leaves are cut off too close to the root,
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the color of the beets, one of their greatest attractions, will be lost in cooking. The crispness of salad plants—celery, lettuce, radish, and onion—is enhanced if they are gathered early in the morning and stood in water in a shady, cool place until they are required for use. Such crops as Brussells sprouts, kale, celery, and parsnips are considered to be improved in flavor after they have been slightly frozen. The fruits of tomato, watermelon, and muskmelon should be allowed to ripen on the plants. Muskmelons are ripe when the fruit parts readily from the stem on being lifted in the hand.

Proper harvesting is a prime necessity if vegetables are to be successfully stored for winter use. Bruised, broken or diseased vegetables should always be rejected, as decay is almost certain to take place when they are stored, and this is likely to spread to the sound vegetables.

A cellar with an earthen floor, well ventilated and frost-proof, in which a temperature of from 40° to 45° Fahr. can be maintained, forms a splendid storage-place for potatoes, the majority of the root crops, and some of the leaf vegetables. If there is a furnace in the cellar which raises the temperature too much, the coolness required may be obtained
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by partitioning off part of the cellar, preferably in a corner containing a window, so that ventilation may be secured.

Quite a number of vegetables can be successfully stored in the open by burying them in pits or trenches and covering with straw, salt hay, and earth. Some of the disadvantages of this method are the inaccessibility of the vegetables when the weather is severe, and the difficulty of looking them over occasionally so that diseased and decayed specimens may be removed. When storing vegetables in this way it is important that the whole of the covering should not be put on at one time, as this endangers the whole pile of vegetables through the possibility of heating.

Root, Tuber, and Bulb Crops

ARTICHOKE (JERUSALEM).—The tubers of this plant are unaffected by frost and may be allowed to remain in the ground all winter. In those sections where the frost penetrates the ground deeply a supply sufficient for use during the winter should be dug in the fall and stored in sand in a cool cellar.

PARSNIP, HORSERADISH, and SALSIFY may be treated in the same way as the preceding.
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Beets should be carefully dug up after the first frost and handled gently to avoid breaking or bruising them. Cut off the leaves about an inch above the roots and pack them with moist sand or earth in boxes in a cool cellar. Covering the roots in this way maintains their freshness and prevents shriveling.

Carrots.—In the fall large numbers of fibrous roots are produced on the sides of the large tap-root. These roots spoil the symmetry of the carrots and impair their flavor. The crop should therefore be harvested before these fibrous roots form. Observation of the roots is the only way of determining the proper time to dig them up. In other respects they are stored the same as beets.

Potatoes for winter use should be dug on a dry day as soon as possible after the tops have died down. Leave them lying on the surface of the ground for a few hours, so that they may dry properly. (It is inadvisable to allow them to be exposed to the light for too long a period, as it will cause the tubers to become green and unfit for use.) They can then be gathered up and placed in boxes or barrels in a cool, frost-proof cellar, but not exposed to the light. All diseased or injured tubers should be laid aside for immediate use, provided they are not too far gone, in
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which case they may be boiled and fed to pigs or chickens, or destroyed by burning, so as to avoid the possibility of spreading disease.

Potatoes may also be stored outdoors in sections where the winters are not too severe. A high-lying sandy piece of ground should be chosen on which to make the "pit." Dig out the soil for a depth of about six inches and line the excavation with three inches of straw. Place the potatoes in a pile on this and cover with a similar thickness of straw or hay. Place over this a layer of earth three inches thick to prevent the straw from blowing away. Gradually increase the covering as the weather becomes more severe, until a thickness of a foot or eighteen inches is reached. A layer of manure over this is advisable in very cold climates. If the pile is a large one it is important that ventilation should be provided for. This may be accomplished by sticking a stovepipe into the center of the pile and allowing the top to project above the covering of earth, or by allowing a tuft of the straw that forms the first covering to extend in the same manner. This vent-hole must be covered with a board, a piece of oilcloth, or something similar to prevent rain from entering.
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Other vegetables that may be stored in this way are beets, carrots, turnips, salsify, and parsnips.

Rutabagas and Turnips require to be dug up before severe frost. They can be stored the same way as potatoes.

Sweet Potatoes are very difficult to store over the winter. The loss through decay in storage is enormous every year, even though proper facilities are obtainable. They need a warm, dry room and a constant temperature. The less they are handled after being stored the better. The best advice for those who have raised a crop of this vegetable is to avoid loss by eating them as quickly as possible.

Onions should be properly “cured” before they are stored. This is accomplished by harvesting them during dry, settled weather, and allowing them to lie in windrows two or three days before bringing them indoors. They should then be placed in a cool, airy room in slatted crates, so that air has free access to them. If wet weather is prevalent at harvesting-time they may be “cured” by placing them in a single layer under cover until they are thoroughly dry. The dead leaves and loose scales should be pulled off before storing them.
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Leaf Crops

CABBAGES can be stored by digging them up with some soil attached to the roots, and packing them close together on the floor of a cool cellar. Treated in this way, they are a rather "smelly" vegetable, and, unless the cellar is tightly shut off from the rest of the house, likely to cause some unpleasantness. They can be stored outside in the way recommended for potatoes by placing them head downward in a trench or pit.

CAULIFLOWER.—It is possible to preserve cauliflower, for a short time only, by digging them with roots attached and suspending them head downward in a cool, moist cellar.

CELERY can be dug in the fall and packed closely in boxes in an upright position in a cool cellar. The more roots and soil adhering to the plants the better the chance of success. When the soil dries out it must be watered, but be very careful not to get any water on the leaves or leaf-stalks. Another way of caring for celery is to dig a trench deep enough to accommodate the plants when they are placed upright. Pack them as tightly as possible in this and cover with boards to keep out rain. In severe weather it will be neces-
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Sary to put on an additional covering of straw and earth.

Parsley.—In sections where the winter is not too severe parsley may be kept green through the greater part of the winter by covering the patch with a bottomless box, with a pane of glass for covering the top. The box should be banked with manure or leaves, and the glass covered with straw in very cold weather. Parsley can also be dug up, placed in plant-pots, making the soil firm about the roots, and kept in a cool, sunny room.

Seed or Fruit Crops

Beans.—Dry shell beans should be allowed to stay on the plants until the pods dry up and become yellow. They may then be gathered, and shelled when convenient. If they are infested with weevils they should be dry baked in a temperature of about 145° Fahr. Care must be taken not to allow the temperature to rise above this figure, or the beans will be roasted and spoiled. Fumigating with carbon disulphide is also an efficacious expedient, but somewhat dangerous because of the explosive properties of the fumigant.
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PUMPKIN and WINTER SQUASH can be stored in a warm, dry room. It is advisable to turn over the fruits selected for storing two weeks or so before they are harvested, so that the side that has been lying on the ground may have its rind hardened by exposure to sun and air.

Although concerned primarily with "war gardens," the methods advocated can be used by all vegetable-growers who practise intensive cultivation. The fundamental principles of soil management also apply equally to flower-gardens.

The writer has found in his experience that good crops can be raised, on what would be usually considered poor soil, by men and women who know little of horticultural practices. Larger crops could have been produced had they known more of the art of growing vegetables. It is to help such people that this book has been written, from information gained during twenty years of professional experience.

It is the earnest hope of the author that the crops raised by "war gardeners" will be of such a size as to cause this last chapter to be the one that is most consulted.