

EVENT PRESS RELEASE

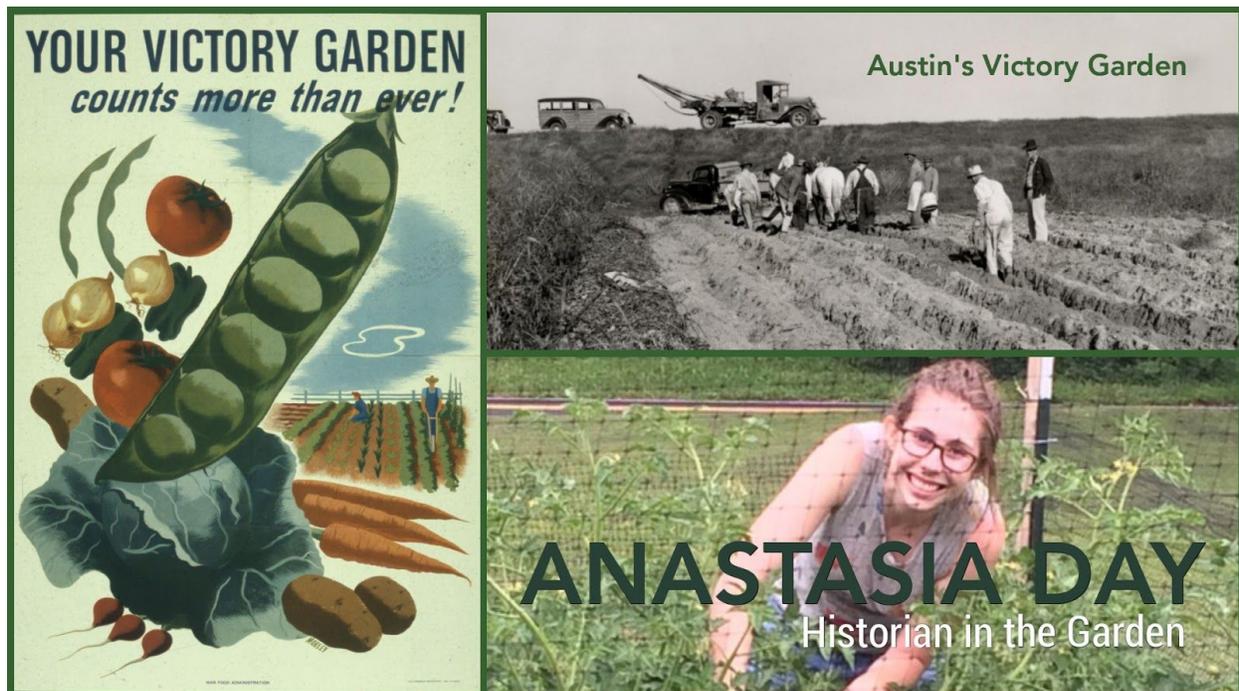
CONTACT

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Digging into the History of Victory Gardens

DATE: Monday, September 14, 2020 **TIME:** 6 p.m. CST **LOCATION:** Online



(Austin, Texas) Austin Organic Gardeners (AOG) continue to celebrate our 75th anniversary as the oldest organic garden club in the U.S. with guest speaker Anastasia Day, The Historian in the Garden. She will be digging into the history of Victory Gardens, which happens to be a large reason for the formation of AOG in 1945. She has been featured in the NYTimes, Slate, and Gastropod, shattering many of the nostalgic myths about World War II-era Victory Gardens.

With the current health crisis and panic around access to food and seeds, everyone is talking about Victory Gardens. CBS went so far as to dub these brand new beds of beets and broccoli "COVID-19 Victory Gardens." In Austin, our 75-year-old garden club is still at war fighting the same system that gave rise to organic, chemical-free gardening. This pandemic has once again exposed the equity problem of access to a healthy, local, and sustainable food. We continue to provide the community with education to help people seek harmony with nature through organic gardening education.



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With everyone quarantined at home, we have received a flood of new activity in our social media community. Most would think that an old club that is used to the analog world would have a hard time pivoting online, but we were up and Zooming right away! We continue our mission online with monthly lectures from guests making history. Our last speaker Tiffany Washington told the history of Black Farming Heritage in Austin, Texas and her own personal struggle of being the first black-owned farm in Austin in 70 years. We nearly maxed out the Zoom account!

In addition to digging into the history of Victory Gardens, our members will also be transforming our demonstration beds at Zilker Botanical Garden into a side-by-side Victory Garden with designs from 1945, the year AOG formed, and a more modern 2020 Victory Garden. We will be sharing our progress through free video lessons and photos on social media.

EVENT DESCRIPTION: In 1943, the backyard plots, community gardens, and industrial easements cultivated as Victory Gardens produced 42% of the fresh produce United States citizens consumed in that year. As many as *two thirds* of all U.S. citizens participated in making this wartime movement the most successful local food movement in American history. Popular memory cites Victory Gardens as historic inspiration for sustainable, grassroots food activism today, in contrast to the corporate agribusiness and processed food industries of the twenty-first century.

Anastasia's scholarship offers a different interpretation of Victory Gardens, but one no less useful for modern activists. Her study centers on factory metaphors of industrial production used in materials promoting the Victory Garden movement. The project illuminates how Victory Gardens were a part of the military-industrial productionist regime on the American homefront. She examines the role Victory Gardens played in the emergent industrial foodways of mid-century America, how they affected industrial labor relations and public relations, and how they mediated relationships between citizen, state, and nature through food. Ultimately, her hope is to explain what it means to think of gardening as “a manufacturing process in which you and Nature go into partnership.”

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Anastasia is a history doctoral candidate and Hagley Scholar in Capitalism, Technology, and Culture at the University of Delaware. She is a historian of environment, technology, business, and society, themes that collide uniquely in food. Her dissertation is entitled “Productive Plots: Nature, Nation, and Industry in the Victory Gardens of the U.S. World War II Home Front”.



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GUEST SPEAKER CONTACT:

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AUSTIN VICTORY GARDENS:

[Men Digging Sweet Potatoes at Victory Garden](#)

[Sweet potatoes gathered from City's Victory Garden](#)

[Mayor Tom Miller - City Canning](#)

[Victory Garden at Bull Creek Greenbelt Upper](#)

AUSTIN ORGANIC GARDENERS DIGITAL ARCHIVES:

[The Austin Citizen - Newspaper Article from 1972](#)

[60th Anniversary COA Proclamation](#)

[60th Anniversary Press Release](#)

All of our events are FREE and we are always looking for new members to help us support our mission. Visit AustinOrganicGardeners.org to become a member of the oldest organic garden club in America. Memberships are only \$10 a year.



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