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# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

OWI-1624

Victory Gardens can be protected from animal pests without the necessity of destroying the responsible animals, states the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

"With food as essential as it is today, both for our armed forces and for civilians, every effort should be made to protect vegetables growing in Victory Gardens from undue destruction by animal pests," declares Dorr D. Green, chief of the Service's Division of Predator and Rodent Control.

Under some circumstances, Mr. Green pointed out, cottontail rabbits eat all sorts of herbage—leaves, stems, flowers, and seeds of herbaceous plants and grasses—and leaves, buds, bark, and fruits of woody plants or trees. Usually, however, they prefer the most succulent foods, as young shoots, clover, alfalfa, and garden vegetables.

Because so many Victory gardeners have sought information on methods of controlling cottontails and other animal pests, the Service has prepared a mimeographed leaflet entitled "Protecting Victory Gardens from Animal Pests", which is now available for free distribution.

"Cottontails are easily trapped alive," says the leaflet, "and while this method of preventing damage to Victory Gardens may be slow, it is the best method to employ when the animals damage gardens near towns and cities. It would be well for gardeners to live-trap the few rabbits that may be living in the close proximity to a garden before or immediately following planting time, transporting and releasing trapped animals in areas where they will cause little or no damage."

Since there is a closed season on cottontail rabbits in many States, gardeners interested in protecting plots from rabbit depredations should ascertain from local State conservation officials when trapping is legal before undertaking control measures, Mr. Green advised. In a few States, game laws permit farmers and fruit growers to destroy the animals to protect crops or trees.

Several different kinds of traps which are very effective for taking rabbits are described in the leaflet. Many of the animals are caught in

the old-fashioned box traps set with a figure-4 trigger with cord attached. An improvement on this familiar trap, widely used in the Middle West, is the Wellhouse trap, which can be made at home very easily. Commercial trap manufacturing companies also make traps for taking rabbits alive.

Another popular, and permanent, rabbit trap is made of sewer tile and is used extensively on farms in Kansas. This type of trap is especially suitable for open lands and prairies where rabbits cannot find many natural hiding places.

Moles, pocket gophers, woodchucks, and occasionally field mice, also can cause damage in Victory Gardens.

Leaflet No. 236, "Protecting Victory Gardens from Animal Pests", tells in detail how to construct the Wellhouse and the sewer tile traps. A free copy may be obtained by writing to the Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Ill.