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An Inside Look

RADIO REPORTS AND word of mouth were how my family learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7, 1941. When we returned to our home in Red Springs, North Carolina, from a family outing that day, we had no idea that my father would be away from the family for almost five years. When he went off to war, we moved to Davidson, my dad's family home, where the community and church provided support and resources for us and other fragmented families. During those quiet years, I learned to garden with encouragement from my grandmother, Miss "Nannie," and many local residents. We endured many privations—including being limited to a gallon and a half of gas a week for our Chevy—but nothing dimmed our patriotism.

Because of the astounding evolution of communications technology over the last 60 years, on September 11, my wife and I saw the second plane crashing into the World Trade Center tower live on television. Unlike the Pearl Harbor attack, the experience was in real time. But, as with Pearl Harbor, we knew immediately that our lives and way of life were forever changed.

Few of us were able to join bucket brigades, provide medical services, or directly assist the survivors. But there are many other ways we can all help to provide moral support for our country and service men and women. As in previous national emergencies, gardening for food—much like the Victory Gardens of World War II—beauty, and sustainability must be emphasized to ensure that the progress we have made does not get neglected as our nation gears up to contain global terrorism.

Other ways we can all help include sharing our time, the products of our gardens, and our knowledge of plants and gardening traditions. If you know children and adults who could use some brightening time, give them a call, make a surprise visit, take them on a day trip, or drop off a gift of plants or flowers. Share heirloom seeds or the harvest from your own garden with others. Teach friends, neighbors, and relatives how to successfully grow plants for food and beauty. Cultivate a new generation of storytellers by passing along cherished gardening experiences and family traditions.

We must also ensure that our mobilization activities do not have an adverse effect on the health of our environment. And we must not stop gardening and planning new gardens. We have no idea how long the new national emergency will be in force, so it's important not to pass up opportunities to create and plant legacies that will be around for future generations.

Now it's more important than ever to find the "right plants for the right locations" to honor the continuing legacy of the United States of America. I believe, more than ever, that the green of plants is the color of hope.

Ever in green, topped with red, white, and blue banners,



H. Marc Cathey

—H. Marc Cathey, *AHS President Emeritus*