A Garden of Hope, Peace and Justice Program at Val-Kill

This is our first year conducting the garden program at Val-Kill. This year the senior girls scout troop # 10012 from Dutchess county signed up and made a seasonal commitment to the program. The program components will help the girls earn their "Sow What? Journey, and Harvest Award.

The girl scout journey focuses on food land issues starting with following the food system cycle (the journey of food and your food footprint). What do you eat, where does it come from , how is it made, who makes it, how is it brought to you, what resources are in the process, and is there a better way?

In the first part of the project the girls learned about Eleanor Roosevelt's Legacy by taking a house and grounds tour, and then participating in the park human rights program "Where do Human Rights Begin?"Through examination of Eleanor's "My Day" journal, articles she wrote, speeches she gave, political moves she was involved in, and her role in the writing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the girls compared and contrasted human rights food issues of today with similar issues in Eleanor's time

After learning about Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy in human rights the girls began planning the garden with the park horticulturist. This included selecting heirloom seeds, mapping out the planting, preparation, planting, maintaining the garden weekly, and then on their own distributing the harvest to a local food bank. Plans are also being made to preserve a seed bank for Val-Kill's future gardens.

Through the journey of the "Garden for Hope, Peace and Justice" program the girls have been called to action, and they have discovered what makes it personal for them. As Eleanor did; they too have begun to make a difference by starting to make positive changes in their community, close to home.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home, so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

What is your food footprint?

One of Eleanor Roosevelt 's Legacies was her work on the Universal Declaration Human Rights. Article #25 specifically addresses concerns of healthy living.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Article # 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Val-Kill Flower & Vegetable Garden 2012

Eleanor Roosevelt's " My Day" entries from 1942/43 relevant to the Garden project:

March 3, 1942

SEATTLE, Monday . . . .

While I am out here to see my daughter, Anna, who is having an appendectomy, I have been thinking about things which I have neglected to tell you. One of them is a little ceremony which occurred at our house in New York City last Thursday afternoon. I received then the first collection of red, white and blue flower seeds, and hope to plant them in the garden at the big house at Hyde Park and at my cottage. This presentation launched the British-American Ambulance Corps drive to raise, by the sale of these one-dollar packages, the money to buy ambulances for use abroad. Little Joan Manning, who belongs to Troop 213 of the Girl Scouts, presented me with a very patriotic red, white and blue, old-fashioned bouquet, showing what delightful flowers we can grow next summer.

There are not only flower seeds on sale, but vegetable seeds as well. These packages contain thirteen different varieties of vegetable seeds. Unfortunately, we cannot have patriotic colors in vegetables, but it is just as patriotic to grow them, because they will help to feed us the kind of food which we all need.

There is a method ……..

March 31, 1942
NEW YORK,

Monday - Yesterday morning, in Hyde Park, the day dawned gloriously; a blue sky and cold, crisp weather. I went out to discuss the best place for a garden with the man who does the outside work. We are going to plant extra things for ourselves and for preserving purposes and winter use, as well as some things which we can contribute, if necessary, to the school lunch program, should their supplies from surplus commodities be reduced this coming year.

I found considerable concern…….

July 3, 1943
HYDE PARK, Friday

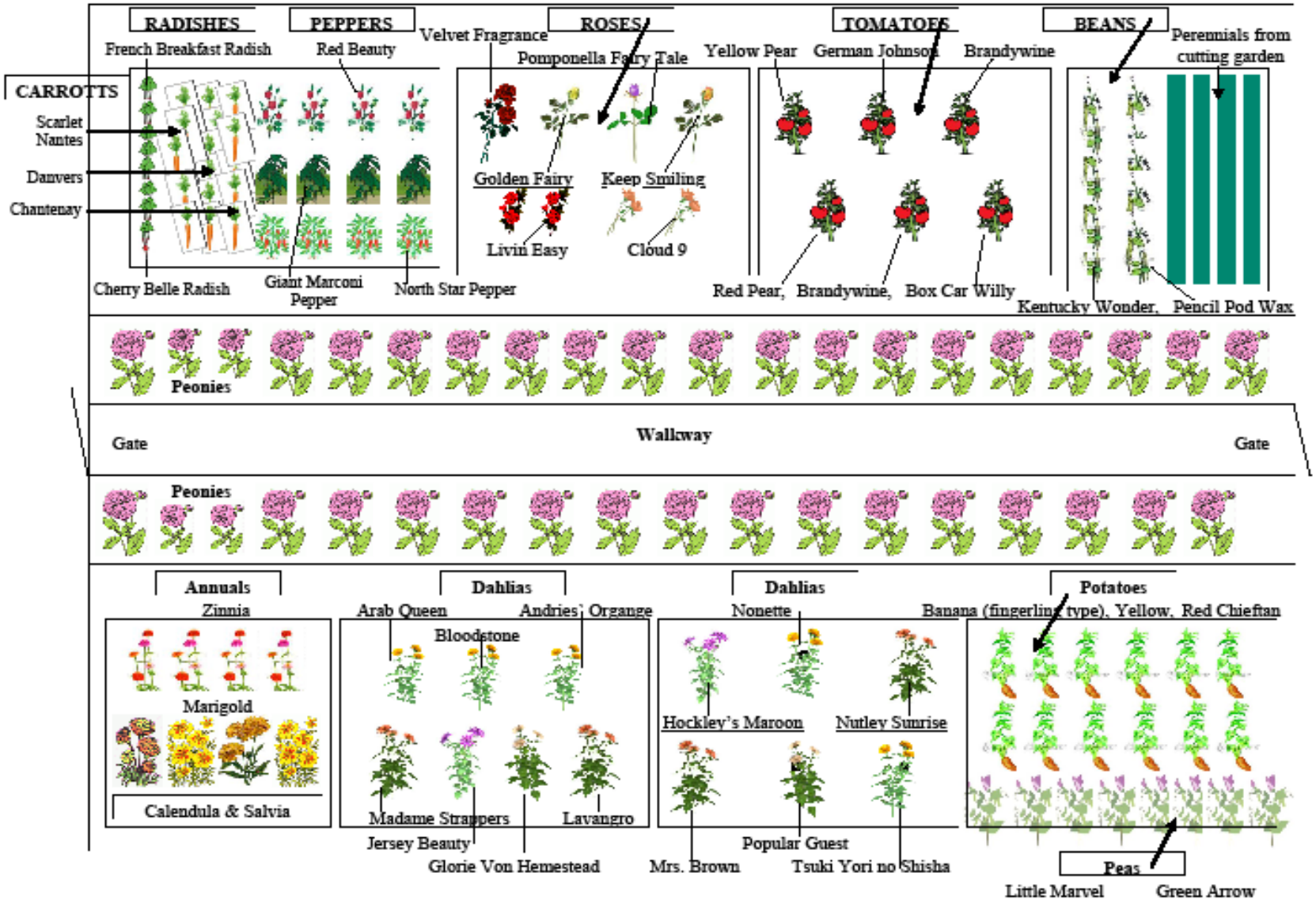
Back in the country and though I am busy, it is not the kind of occupation which takes up every minute as in Washington.

We are getting good vegetables from our garden now and enjoying them greatly. This subsistence farming, so to speak, which everyone is being encouraged to engage in, has spread a long distance away. I heard the other day from the Department of Agriculture that the armed forces were starting a garden of many acres on Guadalcanal. It will be a big garden and ought to feed a great many of our boys, and give them many of the things they would be getting at home, for to my surprise, that climate will apparently allow a great many of our vegetables to be grown very profitably. I have a feeling that probably melons will also grow there, though that was not on the list which the Department of Agriculture sent me. I can't help thinking what pleasure the boys who were farmers back home, will have in working in that garden so far away from home, and I hope they are allowed to have some flowers too, since man does not live by bread alone.

Meet the Girl Scouts From Troop #10012

Dutchess County Unit

Val-Kill Flower & Vegetable Garden 2012



The Girls kept a journal record of what they did each week.

Eleanor Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site

A Garden of Hope, Peace, and Justice Program

Journal Focus Questions:

Be sure to write all of these pieces of information every time you enter notes into the journal.

Date:_____ Who participated:_____

Start Time:_____ End Time:_____

Weather : _____
Temperature:_____

What did you do in the garden:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Things you want know:

_____
_____
_____
_____

What Concerns or questions do you have?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Equipment List

What tools do you need for next time?

What tools need repairing?

What questions did visitor's ask?

What comments did they have?

What did you harvest today?

What did you learn today?

Project Leaders

Anna de Cordova

Horticulturist

Susanne Norris

Education Specialist

Girl Scout Leaders

Brenda Keller

Lena Goettel

Getting Started with the right equipment.

Peas are up!

Will they ever grow?...

Anna discusses the importance of thinning seedlings.

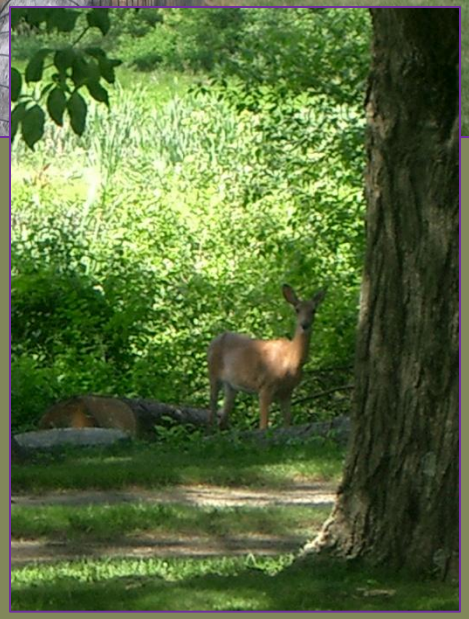
The girls mulch their Tomatoes with straw.

Using All Heirloom Seeds

Kentucky Wonder & Pencil Pod Wax Beans

Checking for Diseases and Insects

Visitors admire the garden, and ask questions.



Don't Even Think About it!

Keeping Record…

Eleanor's Garden Grows!

The Flowers are full of sunshine!

A Beautiful Morning

24 Carrot Gold !

Washing the Produce

The End Result is Beautiful!

We did it! Proud and happy garden growers!

Modeling after Eleanor Roosevelt's contributions to human rights the girls decided their troop would donate the project harvest to a local food kitchen. This is their harvest award in-service contribution.

~ THE END ~