

Date: 4/30/2020 10:33:31 PM

Subject: Blog

HARLAN RICHARDS

May 1, 2020

### Fight COVID-19: Plant a Garden

I live in seclusion, isolated in prison where I have been held longer than many people have been alive. The advantage is that nothing in the real world affects me directly so I can be more objective than most free world people. The downside is that since I can't experience directly what everyone is going through out there I'm often out of sync with mainstream society.

For instance, seeing all those people on the news bemoaning their fate and carrying on about 14 days of quarantine or having to stay at home during the pandemic seems ridiculous. Apparently, they don't have a clue about what their tax dollars are doing to millions of their fellow citizens in state and federal prisons throughout our country. Perhaps if they knew how terribly our prisoners are treated they wouldn't feel so bad about their current minor inconveniences during the pandemic.

Don't for a moment rationalize and justify prisoners' treatment by saying they are criminals being punished for crimes. Since Bill Clinton and the Republican Congress passed the antiterrorism and death penalty act in the mid-90s, a person in prison is just as likely to be innocent as guilty. Our court systems are set up to put selected citizens in prison regardless of guilt or innocence. The procedural rules and jury instructions are created and implemented in such a manner that will ensure defendants will be found guilty. Every once in a blue moon someone is acquitted - usually a celebrity in a California court - which reassures an uninformed public that our court system metes out justice. But I digress, that's not what I intended to write about.

While so many people are off work and our economy is drooping, why not do something constructive while practicing social distancing? During World War II many citizens were encouraged to plant victory gardens. Strict rationing was in place to feed the troops. To ease food shortages citizens were encouraged to plant their own vegetable gardens to feed themselves and contribute to the national food supply.

Why not start your own vegetable garden? If you own your own home, convert your flower beds to veggies or dig up part of your back yard. If you don't have your own land, contact a local community garden and reserve a plot from them. If you grow more than you can use, donate it to a food pantry.

If those options are not viable, put a pot on your balcony with a tomato plant or fill a window box with herbs for cooking.

The point is that it is a positive thing to do while social distancing, the veggies taste better than mass grown veggies and you'll get some much needed exercise to stave off that dreaded Quarantine-15 (15 extra pounds you've probably gained since staying home).

Good luck. I hope you all find that you have green thumbs and bumper crops.