



## How Gardening Can Positively Impact Your Mental Health



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Research has shown that spending time outside is good for our bodies and our minds. Gardens have served not only as places to grow plants but as spaces for people to relax, to focus, and to connect with nature and each other. Gardening can provide many mental health benefits for your daily life.

### Benefits of Gardening for Mental Health

Gardening can improve many aspects of mental health, focus, and concentration.

- **Improves mood.** Gardening can make you feel more peaceful and content. Focusing your attention on the immediate tasks and details of gardening can reduce negative thoughts and feelings, helping you feel better in the moment.
- **Boosts self-esteem.** Self-esteem is how much you value and feel positively about yourself. Helping a plant grow is a big win. When you see your hard work pay off with healthy plants, your sense of pride gets a boost.
- **Improves attention span.** Gardening can change how well you pay full attention to a single activity. If you struggle with staying focused on tasks, conversations, or topics in your daily life, gardening can help you learn to concentrate on what's right in front of you without getting distracted.
- **Provides exercise.** Things like weeding, digging, and raking are good exercise. Regular exercise reduces anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges, and can help prevent dementia. If you don't like going to the gym, gardening can be an enjoyable way to still get these benefits.
- **Encourages social bonds.** Gardening with others at a community garden or other group setting takes teamwork to achieve shared goals. Being part of a larger group can benefit your mental health by increasing your social connections and your support system.
- **Sensory element.** Gardening and spending time in nature can help bring you back to yourself. When you spend time in nature, getting your hands dirty, using your scents to partake into the sounds and scents around you, a sense of belonging arises.
- **Lower cortisol levels.** Studies by Davis Health at the University of California show that being in nature has a positive effect on our bodies, reducing cortisol levels, muscle tension and lowering our heart rate, while increasing vitamin D, which is important for bones, blood cells and the immune system. Just what the doctor ordered!

### Tips on Gardening for Mental Health

You can include gardening in your life in many ways.

- **Get involved at a community garden.** A community garden is a shared space where people grow plants in one large area or in smaller individual plots. This is also a great place to ask questions and learn from experienced gardeners.
- **Decide what you want to grow.** Do you have a favorite flower, fruit, or vegetable? Different plants need varying amounts of care. Make choices about what to grow based on how much time you have, where you live, and how much money you can invest in your plants.
- **Grow plants indoors.** You don't need to own land to start gardening. Plenty of plants grow well indoors in pots or planters. All you need is a window or artificial sunlight source, potting soil, containers, and other supplies based on what plants you grow.

To speak to someone at Easterseals MORC, call 1.800.75.SEALS.

If you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health emergency, call or text 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

Source: [WebMD](#), [Tom's Guide](#)



Scan the code to learn more about the Choose Kindness campaign.