

## Dig This!

Experiences of growing and landscaping here in Newfoundland by our seasoned landscape horticulturalists.

### Why Gardening is Good for Our Mental Health

Stepping outdoors into a landscaped garden can lift one's spirits. Research has shown that spending time outdoors is great for our body and minds. Those who follow such practices like Yoga are taught that nature helps us ground our energy. Exactly how do we benefit from spending time in nature, especially through gardening?

I recently read an online article from "Psychology Today" that gives us a more detailed explanation on how gardening can aid our mental health and help us heal. This article outlines 10 reasons, and I found the following reasons spoke to me.



It is said that most of our suffering comes from trying to control things that we cannot and that we have to accept the limits of what we can control in our lives. Gardening helps us practice letting go and watching nature take over. Gardening allows us to prepare the best environment for our plants, and then step back and let nature take over from there. Some plants will thrive, some will not.

As a result of this, we are guided to move away from our perfectionism. Trying to be perfect, to match up to high expectations, can lead to frustration, unworthiness, and strained relationships. Gardening allows us to step away from being perfect.

Watching a plant and garden grow and change over time allows us to develop a "growth mindset." It allows us to realize that we are always growing and changing, and this is beautiful. We are continually learning and changing, just like our garden.



Gardening also allows us to connect to the world we live in, on a physical level. To touch the plants and soil is more soul feeding than staring at a computer or phone screen all day. Digging in the soil and watering the plants improves our connection to the earth. We surround ourselves in greenery and beautiful flowers which touch all our senses and reduce anxiety and stress.

Weeding and watering the garden also puts us in a meditative state. We are focused in the present moment and thus our minds are not dwelling on what could have been or what will be. We are present and mindful as we work in our gardens.

Also, let us not forget the exercise that gardening gives us. We bend, stretch and crouch while

planting, pruning and pulling on weeds. Not having to drive to the gym but just stepping outside into our own backyard for exercise is rewarding. Growing food that we can eat and the pride of all that we have accomplished in our gardens is soul feeding to say the least! During the winter season we can plant indoors. Lettuce, herbs, and other greens can be easily grown inside all year long.



So when the growing season is upon you, remember that just outside your backdoor is the potential to harness your soul's growth. By planning and planting a garden, working and learning how to grow certain plants brings us the delight and satisfaction of creating something beautiful. It's something that releases us from our mind's worries and lands us in the mist of happiness and gratification.

Give it a try. I bet you will love it!

*Doreen Layman, Landscape Manager  
Murray's Landscape Services*

Read more at:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/think-act-be/201906/10-mental-health-benefits-gardening>