

Gardening soothes the soul  
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Gardening is defined as cultivation of a plot of land. That actually makes it sound like work. While gardening can be somewhat labor intensive, it can also be very relaxing and healthy.

The act of gardening provides physical exercise. It is just as effective as going to the gym and provides bends, twists, reaches and pulls. The physical activities of raking, hoeing, shoveling, composting and planting can be some of the best exercise around. It all burns fat and keeps the blood circulation flowing.

But it's not just physical. Gardening makes you think. If you want your garden to produce well or look pretty, you have to think ahead to the final output of what you put in to it. It is a creative outlet as well as a physical activity. When gardening, you use all 5 senses.

And if you have stress in your life, you should really give it a try. Gardening is very relaxing and one loses track of time when puttering around in the soil. Nature has a way of soothing us and making us forget about our daily problems. The combination of fresh air, sun and the wonderful scents of the plants and the earth are very calming.

Studies have actually shown that gardening has healthy psychological benefits. Connecting with nature and life's natural rhythm can be like a vacation in from daily stresses. Research has shown that some people have actually recovered more quickly from illness who are exposed to beautiful gardens or participate in the act of gardening.

Gardening also gives one a sense of accomplishment. Once a patch of earth has been weeded or planted, you can look at it and feel satisfied with a job well done.

Other than the mental, emotional and physical benefits of gardening, one can actually save money. If you grow your own vegetables and fruit, just think of the money you will save at the grocery store. In addition, the food you grow generally is healthier and tastes better than the produce that you buy.

Another great thing about gardening is that there is no age limit. Children, teens and adults can all enjoy the feel of the earth in their hands and enjoy watching seeds turn into green plants. Families can work together in the garden or one can get some alone time and reflect in quieter times. Gardening has even been used as therapy for children who have been abused or those who are from broken homes. It helps them build self-esteem and has a calming effect.

But gardening does require an investment. Time and attention are needed to have a beautiful garden. But by that investment, one can focus their attention on something positive. It gets you outdoors and teaches you patience. And for the most part the art of gardening does not produce instant gratification. You have to wait for plants to grow or seeds to sprout. But it can be very exciting to check on your plants and seeds daily and see what has happened while you weren't watching.