

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Gardening and Mental Health

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Gardening can positively impact a number of health outcomes, including mental health. Gardening has both immediate and long-term effects on mental health. Also known as “horticultural therapy,” it has shown promise for improving chronic and acute mental health conditions. People report feeling happier almost immediately when engaging in gardening. Over time, individuals lowered their body mass index (BMI) through physical activity and improved nutrition. One study identified improvements in depression, life satisfaction, and cognitive function continuing for three months after therapy.

Sure, you could get a gym membership, but with gardening, you’re exercising in the sun! Physical activity while in the sun decreases cortisol, the stress hormone, and increases endorphins, which make us feel good (you should still protect yourself with sunblock, light clothing, and a hat).

A report in the *Mental Health Journal** cited gardening as being able to reduce stress and improve mood, with a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety. Read about the benefits at www.Thrive.org.uk where gardening is used in rehab after a stroke.

