



# ADAPTED GARDENING ACTIVITIES



## GARDENING FOR COGNITION

This information booklet looks at ways of using gardening if you have difficulty with thinking processes. It is based on our experience of working with patients in Horticultural Therapy sessions who have difficulty with:

**Attention, Information processing, Memory and Executive Functioning.**

It includes information on how different gardening activities may be beneficial therapeutically and practical advice on how to make gardening tasks easier.



Therapeutic  
Benefits of  
Seasonal  
Horticultural Tasks

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## Therapeutic gardening activities

### Sensory Stimulation

Being present in the garden provides a calming and restful way to stimulate the senses through colour, scent, texture, movement, and sound which constantly changes throughout the seasons.



### Plant Identification

There are so many ways of identifying plants using the different senses. If you don't recognize a plant visually you may recognize the scent. If the colour doesn't prompt recognition maybe the shape of the plant does. Making these connections can be a way of helping to categorize and recall this information.

### Being in Nature

Inspired by the Chelsea Physic Garden, we have created our own Scavenger Hunts based on plants from our therapeutic garden areas. This can help to test attention, concentration, memory and ability to process visual information as you search for the plants on the list. Or you may just want to enjoy being outdoors in the natural environment.



Scavenger Hunts  
Chelsea Physic  
Garden.

### Be creative

Click on the left hand link to visit HighGround's website section for further details. Use objects found in the natural environment to make seasonal crafts such as wreaths and bug hotels.



How to Guides  
HighGround

### Gardening for all levels

We grade the task for everyone. Whether you are new to gardening or a more experienced gardener there are activities to suit all levels of ability and experience. From sowing a few seeds in a pot indoors to planting and planning a border or managing an allotment or larger garden. There are endless ways of engaging with gardening in a way that meets your needs. You can keep it simple and as tasks become more familiar it may enable you to use these as building blocks to work on a bigger task or project. You can always go back to the first building block if it feels overwhelming. This is a good way to balance learning new tasks with repetition of tasks that are familiar.



Adapted  
Gardening  
activities  
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Get growing  
– how to get  
started with  
gardening.  
RHS Gardening.



Gardening for  
Beginners.  
BBC Gardeners'  
World Magazine

## Adaptive techniques

### Pace activities

To avoid fatiguing too quickly intersperse repetitive tasks with short rest breaks or ensure that you take a steadier pace to help conserve your energy. It may be helpful to use seating or a perching stool.

### Complete tasks in stages

So you do not feel too overwhelmed by trying to remember lots of information in one go.

### Write things down

So you do not have to retain so much information using tools such as diaries, notebooks, wall charts and calendars. There are a wide range of garden planners available to help plan and prompt you.

### Plant labels

It's good practice to label plants with the name, variety and date if grown from seed but this provides a useful prompt.

### Use audio or visual prompts

If writing lists or using words is more difficult, such as audio recordings, pictures, photos, or videos. Electronic devices such as mobile phones, smart watches or I-pads are a great way to do this.

### Organise your environment

Consider what equipment and plant material you will need before an activity and to clear up afterwards, make a note of this as above. Have everything you will need to hand so it is easier to focus on the task.

### Give yourself time

The pleasure of gardening is in letting things evolve and grow naturally, there is no need to rush.



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10 of the Best  
Free Garden  
Planners.  
Garden and  
Happy



Grow your  
own app.  
RHS Gardening



Sowing Seeds.  
Thrive



Gardening Tools  
for disabled  
people.  
Thrive

## Adaptive tools

Follow the links to the left for further information on:

- Garden planners.
- Useful app to provide gardening advice, alerts, and space to record notes.
- Thrive website providing step by step instruction in words or pictures on seed sowing.
- Thrive equipment tool finder and advice on practical ways to carry on gardening.



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