

25 Incredible Benefits of Gardening

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Gardening is much more than a hobby or fun pastime. In fact, there are many proven benefits of gardening that people enjoy. No matter if you're a hobby gardener or a professional-level horticulturist, spending time out digging in the dirt and caring for your plants, you too can enjoy these various benefits of gardening. If you're not sold on the concept, I'm going to change your mind with this article.

I've rounded up the 25 biggest benefits of gardening for you in this post. If you're considering getting into gardening, either a huge outdoor garden or a small [herb garden](#) in your home, understanding the benefits is a great way to feel good about what you're doing and enjoy it even more. I invite you to read on and discover the various large and small benefits of gardening that you can enjoy every time you settle down to tend to your plants.

There are multiple proven benefits of gardening, and you can experience them all by starting and caring for your vegetable, fruit, or herb garden. It also extends to keeping plants happy and healthy inside.

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1. Gardening Boosts Mood

Did you know that gardening can boost your mood while increasing your self-esteem levels? When you make time to go out and work in your garden, your anxiety levels can go down and you could start to feel less depressed. [One study](#) looked at this benefit of gardening and spanned several years and took people who had diagnosed depression and had them participate in a 12-week long gardening intervention. The researchers measured several mental health aspects before and after the intervention, including the people's depression symptoms. They found that each participant had significant improvement in their symptoms. They also followed the participants for several months after and found that the improvements lasted.

2. Gardening Can Boost Your Immune System

You're a lot more similar to your plants than you realize, and your body is just as capable of photosynthesis as they are. This is where your plants use sunlight to make their food. Your skin works in the same way by absorbing vitamin D for this benefit of gardening. Depending on the color of your skin and how much your clothing covers, [researchers estimate](#) that the sun can create around 8,000 to 50,000 international units of this vitamin. Vitamin D helps strengthen your bones, boost your immune system, and it can also help [lower your risk](#) of developing multiple sclerosis, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, bladder cancer, breast cancer, and colorectal cancer.

3. Gardening Helps Form Connections

Community, family, or school-[oriented container gardens](#) are coming up everywhere around the United States. Some of the main factors that drive these types of garden's popularity, and it has more to do with simple human connections and interaction than the food you get from it. The connections are one of the main benefits of gardening. [One study](#) took students and had them photograph their work before sharing what they learned. Students reported that they got a sense of well-being from the relationships they formed and the new skills they picked up.

A big benefit of gardening is forming connections with new people and strengthening the ones you have while you all work toward a common goal of keeping your garden happy, healthy, and thriving.

4. Gardening Builds Your Strength

Gardening is exercise because you do small tasks like cutting grass or raking that fall under the category of light or moderate exercise. However, you also dig, shovel, and chop wood to get this level up to moderate exercise. All of these tasks ensure

you work your muscles, and this can help build up your strength. You'll eventually use every major muscle group you have when you work in your garden, and this is one of the major benefits of gardening for older people. Gardening can help with weight gain due to age, and [researchers found](#) that gardening could help people sleep up to seven hours a night.

5. Gardening Lowers Stress Levels

Another benefit of gardening is that it can lower your stress levels. It can help you recuperate and bounce back after a stressful event. [One study](#) exposed people to a stressful stimulus. Then they split the group and asked one to garden and one to read quietly. Researchers then tested the stress hormone levels in everyone's body, and they found that the group that gardened had lower stress hormone levels than the group that read quietly. The group that gardened also reported that their moods had returned to a more positive state over the other group.

6. Gardening Protects Your Memory

You can grab a [pair of work gloves](#), head out to your garden, and know that it's helping you protect your memory with this benefit of gardening. Exercise can improve how your brain functions, and [Korean researchers](#) decided to prove that it helps to protect your memory. They gave people being treated for dementia 20-minute exercises to test this theory. The residents spent 20-minutes planting and raking vegetable gardens, and they found that these people had more brain nerve growth factors than people who didn't participate. These findings rang true for both male and female participants.

Remembering everything that you have to do in your garden can help sharpen your memory, and this is a huge benefit of gardening people take advantage of.

7. Gardening Can Help With Addiction Recovery

Horticulture therapy isn't a new concept, and this benefit of gardening has been around for years. Many addiction recovery programs incorporate working with plants as part of their agenda. Plants can provoke positive emotions and feelings in people who are recovering from an addiction, and this makes them an effective rehabilitation tool. [One study](#) took people in a rehab program and offered them the chance to participate in a natural recovery process. They could choose gardening or art as their therapy of choice, and the people who picked gardening had a higher completion rate for the program, and they also reported a higher satisfaction rate.

8. Gardening Can Reduce the Risk of Heart Attacks and Strokes

One great benefit of gardening is that it can help reduce the risks of heart attack or strokes in people who routinely participate in it. You could [grab your gardening tools](#), go outside, and lose a few hours tending your plants to help reduce your anxiety and

stress levels, and this can lower your blood pressure. In turn, this takes a lot of stress off your cardiovascular system. Research shows that people who are older than 60 who participate in gardening activities have a [30% less chance](#) of suffering from a heart attack or stroke than people in the same age group who don't garden.

9. Gardening Improves Hand Dexterity and Strength

Gardening requires you to make precise movements, and this benefit of gardening helps build your hand strength and dexterity. This is especially important as you age, and doctors even recommended [rehab programs](#) for stroke patients involving gardening tasks as a productive and satisfaction to build their hand strength and improve how well their hands work. You should position your body naturally and be careful about repetitive movements to enjoy this full benefit of gardening and avoid injuries like carpal tunnel or tendonitis. Also, use both your left and right hand.

All of the small movements required when you plant your vegetables and care for this is a benefit of gardening because it can help slowly improve your hand strength and dexterity. The more you garden, the better both will get.

10. Gardening Helps with Aerobic Exercises

No matter if you have [raised planter boxes](#), indoor flowers, or a bigger vegetable garden, it's a great way to get a daily dose of aerobic exercise with this benefit of gardening. You may even get so into your project that you don't realize you're starting to break a sweat. Reaching for different tools and plants, pulling weeds out, and bending or twisting as you plant starts to work new muscle groups all over your body. In turn, this can help build your flexibility, stamina, and strength the more you do it. You can slowly lose weight, sleep better, and feel less winded when you do other activities.

11. Gardening Can Help You Eat Better

The cost of fresh produce can skyrocket in the off-months, and this causes a lot of people to turn to canned vegetables. One benefit of gardening is that you can harvest a huge amount of vegetables, and you don't have to be a professional to do it. There are dozens of [easy vegetables to grow](#), and you can preserve them to eat later in the year. You may even discover new vegetables that you've never tried before, and you're getting food that doesn't have pesticide or herbicide treatments on it. You can have fresh, organic vegetables and even fruits if you live in the right climate to grow them.

12. Gardening Can Improve Your Self-Esteem

With your busy life, it's easy for your self-esteem to drop. This is especially true if you've never gardened before and you're not sure if you're going to be good at it or not. One benefit of gardening is that it's a natural and quick [self-esteem booster](#). You plant your seeds, water, weed, and fertilize your garden, and watch it grow. As more

plants start to grow, your self-esteem will also improve. It feels great to accomplish new tasks, and gardens give you endless opportunities to learn new skills.

As your plants start to grow, one benefit of gardening is that your self-esteem levels can shoot through the roof. You'll get much more confident in your abilities as your plants thrive and you can start picking your fruit or vegetables.

13. Gardening Burns a High Amount of Calories

Gardening is commonly labeled as a moderate-intensity level of exercise, and this is especially true if you have a larger garden with [perennial vegetables](#). According to the Centers for Disease Control, you can burn up to 330 calories for every hour you do light yard or garden work. A few years ago, the [American Journal of Public Health](#) published a study that showed that people who participated in a community gardening program ended up with lower BMIs than their neighbors who didn't participate, so you could lose a decent amount of weight while enjoying what you do.

14. Gardening Can Strengthen Your Bones

As you age, your bones can get thinner and much more brittle. Your body's levels of [vitamin D](#) start to drop, and this is the main vitamin that supports bone health. Getting outside in the sunshine and working around in your garden exposes you to more vitamin D through the sun's rays. If you wear shorts and t-shirts while you're out, this maximizes the amount of vitamin D you soak up each time you're outside. This vitamin D can help prevent your bones from getting brittle and weak.

15. Gardening Lowers Blood Pressure Levels

Anyone who has a high blood pressure is at an increased risk for cardiovascular events. One big benefit of gardening is that it can [drop your blood pressure levels](#) without the aid of medication. One way it does this is to naturally reduce your anxiety or stress levels because you get so into tending to your plants. This same phenomenon occurs for people who have indoor gardens or plants too because they all need care. The more time you spend tending to them, the better off it is for your cardiovascular health. As your blood pressure goes down, this reduces the stress on your arteries.

The more time you spend outdoors, the more your blood pressure levels can drop. This benefit of gardening can help several systems in your body be healthier overall, and this can give you a better quality of life.

16. Gardening Can Relieve Chronic Pain

For a lot of people, [chronic pain](#) exists in the joints. They can get stiff, and this makes people less likely to move them because it causes more pain, and it goes in an endless loop. Gardening could help alleviate some of this stiffness caused by

chronic pain. You could start small and have a [Mediterranean herb garden](#) in your home and work at tending it every day. Planting, watering, and maintaining the herbs will help you move your joints, and this can ease some of the symptoms you feel. If the chronic pain is from arthritis, movement can help increase the range of movement you have and decrease some of the swelling.

17. Gardening Helps You Sleep Better

Spending a few hours outside has the pleasant side effect of wearing you out. It also helps you clear your head of all of the anxious or stressful thoughts that are plaguing you, and this can help you [fall asleep faster](#). The moderate workout you get weeding and tending to your garden are other benefits of gardening because it can help you feel more tired. In turn, you should be able to fall asleep quicker, sleep deeper, and wake up feeling refreshed and ready to take on the day. If you garden every day, you could start sleeping much better each night.

18. Gardening Saves You Money

No matter if you decide to grow vegetables or you want to [grow fruit trees](#), one benefit of gardening it entitles you to is saving money. Generally speaking, seeds to start your garden aren't super expensive, and you can create your own fertilizer out of scraps from your kitchen. You can also collect rainwater to keep your plants watered. A small garden can produce a surprising amount of vegetables, and you can preserve them to eat all year-round. This saves you money because you won't have to budget for fruits, vegetables, or herbs when you go to the grocery store.

Being able to harvest your own produce is an excellent way to save money over the cooler months of the year when prices go up to a premium. If you preserve them, you can have organic fruits, vegetables, or herbs whenever you want them.

19. Gardening Exposes You to Good Bacteria

One unexpected benefit of gardening is that it gets you up close and personal with a host of good bacteria. [Several studies](#) show that strains of bacteria found in your garden dirt can stimulate your brain to release serotonin, and this is the feel-good chemical that can help fight off symptoms of depression. It can also boost your immune system. This is a theory called hygiene hypothesis. This theory also suggests that there is a connection between your immune system and your brain. Gardening can help improve both at the same time.

20. Gardening Can Encourage Creativity

Gardening is all about creativity, and one big benefit of gardening is that you can let your creative thrive. Whether this is putting together a [vegetable garden layout](#) to maximize your space or figuring out which vegetables will grow better together, you can get creative with it. If you have kids, you can encourage their creativity levels and ask them to help you set up and maintain the garden. They can even make

adorable garden signs to help you tell which vegetables you planted where to keep track of everything. As a bonus, everyone is learning new skills at the same time.

21. Gardening Encourages Mindfulness

[Mindfulness](#) is a state of focusing on the present moment, and you see it a lot with meditation. However, you can achieve the same state by gardening. One of the benefits of gardening is to be able to dedicate your entire attention to the task at hand. This could be making sure you get all of the weeds out, planting everything in the exact right place, or monitoring your vegetables so you pick them at the best time possible. It's possible to get lost in what you're doing and spend hours out in your garden making sure everything is healthy.

Being out in your garden will help you focus on one task at a time and practice mindfulness. This can help you get into a more calm and centered state of mind that carries over into everyday activities.

22. Gardening Improves Mental Clarity

One hallmark of gardening is that you have to remember a lot of information, especially if you have a bigger garden. This benefit of gardening helps sharpen your mind and improves your memory at the same time. [Studies show](#) that gardening forces you to keep track of several tasks at the same time. You have to remember which vegetables you planted where, their needs, whether or not you [applied your natural fertilizer](#), your watering schedule, and when is the best time to harvest your vegetables. You use more parts of your brain, and this can boost your overall mental clarity.

23. Gardening Gives You Family Bonding Time

Bonding with your family is so important, but it can be hard to accomplish with the digital age. Many families spend a lot of time in front of screens, but gardening gives you a chance to dial this back. You can get your kids in on the fun and use this benefit of [gardening to bond](#). Have them decide which parts of the garden they want to be responsible for and help them take care of it. Teach them about every aspect of growing their own food, and let them help you preserve or cook it when it's time. This can give you hours of bonding time each season.

Getting the whole family out and involved in the garden gives you a few hours a week to bond and catch up on their lives. As a bonus, anyone of any skill level or age can help.

24. Gardening Teaches Responsibility

One of the benefits of gardening is that it is a fun and stress-free way to teach responsibility for everyone in the family. Your kids will learn what happens if they let weeds overtake their garden, and what happens if you don't water them correctly.

You can set up each area of the garden for every kid or family member you have. Give them the [responsibility of helping you](#) keep it healthy and harvesting your vegetables and fruits when it comes time. This can also encourage a love of being outside and doing things with the family.

25. Gardening Gives You a Sense of Purpose

One final benefit of gardening is that it can give you a sense of purpose. It's a way to care for something and nurture it from a tiny seed up to a large plant. Sometimes, this is enough to give you a sense of purpose and pride when the plants take root and start to grow. It doesn't matter if you're taking on a larger project like [growing raspberries](#) or something smaller like keeping a houseplant healthy, the feelings are the same. You can grow plants all year-round to keep this sense of purpose going.