



Therapeutic Gardens: Nature's Healing Touch

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Therapeutic gardens, also known as healing gardens or restorative gardens, are purposefully designed outdoor spaces that promote health and well-being. These gardens offer respite from the hustle and bustle of daily life, providing individuals with opportunities to connect with nature and experience the therapeutic benefits of outdoor environments (Murrioni et al. 2021). Therapeutic gardens have gained recognition as a holistic approach to improving physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The concept of using gardens as therapeutic spaces dates back centuries. Ancient civilizations recognized the healing power of gardens, from the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to the Japanese Zen gardens (Olszewska-Guizzo et al. 2022). In the modern era, the development of therapeutic gardens can be traced to the work of figures like Florence Nightingale and the advent of psychiatric gardens in the 19th century (Zeisel, 2007).

Principles of Therapeutic Gardens

Effective therapeutic garden design is informed by a set of key principles (Horowitz, 2012):

- Inclusivity:** Gardens should be accessible to people of all abilities, accommodating those with mobility issues, visual impairments, and other challenges.
- Nature Integration:** The garden should incorporate diverse plantings, natural materials, and wildlife to provide a rich sensory experience.
- Privacy and Solitude:** Design elements like screening, quiet corners, and intimate seating areas should allow for personal reflection and relaxation.
- Safety and Security:** Thoughtful design can mitigate potential hazards and ensure that the garden is a secure space for visitors.
- Multisensory Stimulation:** Engaging all the senses through the use of textures, scents, sounds, and colors can enhance the therapeutic experience.

Benefits of Therapeutic Garden

The benefits of therapeutic are listed below (Thaneshwari et al. 2018):

- Therapeutic gardens designed for mental relief and physical well-being.
- Supported by extensive research for patients and healthcare staff.
- Beneficial for a diverse range of patient groups, including those with physical and cognitive impairments, seniors, individuals with HIV, and more.
- Interactions with nature and plants improve physical, psychological, emotional, and cognitive health.
- Nature and plant exposure contribute to pain relief, reduced analgesic use, and faster post-surgery recovery.
- Effective for Alzheimer's and dementia patients in terms of health and behavior improvement.

- Reduces anxiety levels, as seen in elderly individuals exposed to outdoor garden environments.
- Video of natural scenes with music reduces pain and anxiety, particularly in burn patients.
- Horticultural therapy diminishes anxiety and depression in individuals with mental illnesses.
- Indoor plants improve indoor air quality by absorbing pollutants and micro-organisms.
- The presence of therapeutic gardens, indoor plants, and garden views enhances patient, staff, and family satisfaction in healthcare settings, creating a positive and healing environment.

Planting material for therapeutic garden: Different types of plants are used in the therapeutic garden out of which the most common used are (Pedrinolla et al. 2019):

Fragrant plants for pleasing the sense of smell to relax and evoke the patients are (Wahyudi et al. 2023):

Plant Name	Characteristics
Lavender (<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>)	Aromatic, soothing fragrance; promotes relaxation and stress reduction.
Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>)	Invigorating scent; enhances memory and concentration; promotes a sense of well-being.
Chamomile (<i>Matricaria chamomilla</i>)	Delicate flowers; calming, anti-anxiety properties; aids in relaxation and sleep.
Echinacea (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)	Vibrant purple blooms; boosts the immune system; symbolizes strength and healing.
Aloe Vera (<i>Aloe barbadensis</i>)	Succulent with healing properties; soothing for skin irritations and burns.
Peppermint (<i>Mentha x piperita</i>)	Refreshing scent; aids digestion and alleviates headaches; cools and invigorates.
Lemon Balm (<i>Melissa officinalis</i>)	Citrusy aroma; reduces stress and anxiety; uplifts mood and promotes relaxation.
Marigold (<i>Calendula officinalis</i>)	Bright and cheerful flowers; promotes skin healing; symbolizes comfort and resilience.

<i>Mathiola incana</i>	<i>Solanum jasminoides</i>
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	<i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i>
<i>Tuberosa hybrida</i>	<i>Quisqualis indica</i>
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	<i>Jasminum sambac</i>
<i>Hiptage benghalensis</i>	<i>Cestrum nocturnum</i>
<i>Tecomajasm inoides</i>	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>

There are numerous therapeutic gardens around the world, each with its unique features and therapeutic qualities (Nieberler-Walker et al. 2023). Here's a list of some well-known therapeutic gardens from various regions:

- Elizabeth Gamble Garden (Palo Alto, California, USA)
- Hammock Hollow Children's Garden (New York Botanical Garden, USA)
- Alnwick Garden (Northumberland, England)
- Anderson Japanese Gardens (Rockford, Illinois, USA)
- Giardino Bardini (Florence, Italy)
- The Butchart Gardens (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada)
- Changi General Hospital Therapeutic Garden (Singapore)

- King Hussein Cancer Center Healing Garden (Amman, Jordan)
- Sensory Garden at RHS Garden Wisley (Surrey, England)
- WheatonArts Healing Gardens (Millville, New Jersey, USA)
- The Samaritans Garden (Jersey, Channel Islands)
- The Green Lane Healing Garden (New Zealand)
- Seattle Japanese Garden (Washington, USA)
- Chelsea Physic Garden (London, England)
- Jardín Botánico-Histórico La Concepción (Málaga, Spain)

Conclusion

Beautiful blossoming plants and foliage can serve as a complementary form of therapy for patients. Furthermore, plants offer a significant therapeutic benefit, particularly for patients who spend extended periods indoors during their recovery from painful surgeries. This review paper provides compelling evidence that the presence of plants directly contributes to the well-being of patients. This non-pharmacological complementary approach not only improves patients' overall health and well-being but also proves cost-effective, benefiting patients and reducing hospitalization and medication expenses for healthcare insurance providers. Healthcare professionals and hospital administrators should consider the incorporation of decorative plants to enhance the healing environment for patients. The healing potential of therapeutic gardens represents a valuable complementary approach to conventional medicine.

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