

Gardening as a Self-Care Practice

From: The Ebeid Institute, Urban Agriculture Alliance of Lucas County, The Arts Commission and OSU Extension, Lucas County

Self-care can be as basic as daily routines like brushing your teeth or staying hydrated by drinking enough water. While it might be easy to list daily tasks that support personal care such as eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising, and connecting with others, there are many additional activities that can offer self-care. Is gardening as a self-care practice as simple as stopping to smell the roses?

Whether you grow roses or not, here are a few examples to help think about what garden actions best support your interests and self-care. One basic way is to think about the five senses. What are your favorite ways to experience the garden at different moments?

- **See** colors, texture, changes in plant growth, tiny beneficial insects, tendrils on plant vines
- **Hear** expected sounds (traffic, birds, etc.) as well as more subtle sounds, such as the swishing of leaves, the buzzing of a bee or a drip or splash of water.
- **Smell** the roses, other flowers and herbs, sweet berries, fresh vegetables, and damp soil.
- **Taste** the sweetness of clover, the spice of hot peppers, the diverse flavors of all types of vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Refresh with a cold glass of infused water.
- **Feel** the weather and temperature, softness of leaves or petals, firmness of a ripe vegetable and the physical feeling of stretching muscles and different body parts as you move and work in the garden.

How can gardening as a self-care practice also be enjoyed indoors?

- Houseplants with starts shared by neighbors
- Bouquets of colorful flowers or fresh herbs
- Photos of nature
- Fresh produce, whether you grew it yourself or purchased it from a local grower, take a moment to appreciate the care, work and energy (including the sun) to produce this item
- Herbs can be used to season and garnish food for fresh flavor. They can also be used in other ways such as using the scent of lavender for calmness, mint to refresh or herbal teas or infused water.

What is one new thing you will do to use gardening as self-care?

For more information on the 2020 monthly garden call-in shows or the partnership between The Ebeid Institute, Urban Agriculture Alliance of Lucas County, The Arts Commission and OSU Extension, Lucas County please visit go.osu.edu/gardencall