Wellness in the Garden

Benefits of Green Gardening

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Many Benefits of Gardening

- Physical
- Mental/Emotional
- Spiritual
- Nutritional
Physical Benefits

- Many physical benefits — considered moderate exercise
- Works all major muscle groups.
- Stretching, Lifting with minimal stress
- Increased flexibility, strengthen joints, decreased BP and cholesterol levels, Lowered risk of diabetes, slows osteoporosis.
Exercise Recommendations

- Follow aerobic model
  - warm up
  - stretch (hips, legs, shoulders, neck)
  - Use variety of motions at a steady pace. Exaggerate.
  - Change motions/tasks every 15 min.
  - Deep breathing.
Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t be a Weekend Warrior.
- Bend at knees and not back
- Use long-handled tools for raking/hoeing
- Kneel or Sit when using hand tools
- Use a cushioned pad for kneeling
- Lift using knees – wheelbarrows/carts are back savers.
Mental/Emotional Benefits

• Stress and Anxiety Relief
  - Right Side Brain Activity
    (side that controls creativity, senses, and worrying)
• Problem Solving
• Sense of Balance and Control
• Used in hospitals, prisons, schools, etc.
Spiritual Benefits

- Soothing, colors, textures, and smells have an uplifting effect on mind and spirit.
- Aromatherapy
- Sense of Circle of Life
- Calming Effect and Quieting of Spirit
Nutritional Benefits

- Gardeners eat a wider variety of vegetables rich in disease-fighting antioxidants and phytochemicals.
- Gardeners have a higher overall intake of vegetables.
- Better tasting, fresher, and safer food.
How to Get Started on a Green Garden?

1. Start Small & Be Realistic - 4 ft by 6 ft raised bed or containers in area with at least 6 hours of full sun.

2. Grow what you like! How much chard can you eat?

3. K.I.S.S. and have Fun!
Green Gardening Tips & Tidbits

- Keep it Real

- Nix the pesticides, weed killers, and chemical fertilizers.
- Use natural controls like compost, mulch, companion planting, soap and water.
Use Your Garbage to Make Compost

- “Gardener’s Gold” or “Black Gold”
- Enriches soil fertility, stimulates root growth, improves soil texture, aeration and water retention.
- Free and easy to do! Can use vegetable scraps, egg shells, coffee grounds, paper, leaves, etc.
Buy Recycled Products

- Containers made from peat moss, cow dung, paper, recycled plastic
- Reuse and repurpose containers.
- Less energy to recycle something that to mine virgin materials.
Go Native!

- Pick plants that are well suited to your area and landscape.
  - already adapted to local conditions
  - easy to grow and maintain
  - require less care and resources
  - natural pest control
- Right Plant – Right Place
Harvest Rainwater

- Add a Rainbarrel to your landscape.
  - Inexpensive and Easy to Build
  - Mineral and chlorine-free water
  - Reduction in stormwater runoff
  - No additional costs for water/sewer
  - Abundant resource
Water with Care!

- Add mulch and compost to retain water and cut down evaporation.
- Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation/timers.
- Water early in the day.
- Water thoroughly and less often.
- Don’t water leaves - water the roots.
Plant for Wildlife

- Provide a pesticide-free garden for natural pollinators.
- Encourage pollinators by planting a diverse variety of native flowers.
- ID insect before you remove it.
- Be friends with the Bees!
- Practice companion planting.
- Provide water and cover.
Follow Power of 4

- EPA’s GreenScapes Program: Reduce, Recycle, Reuse & Rebuy

Reduce output of waste.
Recycle to make compost.
Reuse rainwater for watering.
Rebuy means seeking environmentally friendly products that meet your needs.
Enjoy your garden and reap all the benefits!