

#TREbit: Cultivate Calm By Gardening



Isn't it wonderful when science demonstrates something enjoyable is also good for our overall wellness? For those who enjoy the experience of gardening, it does not take scientific studies to feel the benefits of gardening. However, looking at the science behind the positive impact of gardening can help explain the correlation. [“A new study indicates that people who garden every day have wellbeing scores 6.6 % higher and stress levels 4.2 % lower than people who do not garden at all.”](#)

[Dr. Lauriane Suyin Chalmin-Pui](#) has studied and published numerous papers on the benefit of gardening. She found that, “... **gardening every day has the same positive impact on wellbeing than undertaking regular, vigorous exercise like cycling or running....** When gardening, our brains are pleasantly distracted by nature around us. This shifts our focus away from ourselves and our stresses, thereby restoring our minds and reducing negative feelings.”

Gardening has numerous features that result in calming the brain. A brilliant article by stress.org [“How Can Your Garden Reduce Your Stress Levels?”](#) featuring great infographics by Sloane and Sons, lists numerous ways the body and mind respond in a positive way to gardening.

1. Physical activity
2. Growing your own food or beautiful flowers/plants.
3. Exposure to bacteria (re-think the gloves)
4. Vitamin D
5. Personal Creativity
6. Mental focus and mindfulness
7. Reduction of cortisol

As with any activity, the benefits are directly related to the enjoyment of the activity. A study published by NIH, [“Therapeutic horticulture in clinical depression: a prospective study”](#) demonstrated a **high correlation between decrease in depression with the degree in which gardening captured the participant’s attention.** The improvement in depression was not only immediate but remained significant even at the three-month follow-up. The gift of engaging our minds in gardening distracts us from thinking about our problems!



Not a gardener? Start with something that is low maintenance, such as a potted succulent, lucky bamboo, air plant or philodendron. Try a hanging basket or potted plants that just needs to be watered. Choose with what makes you happy. Remember that our brains respond to senses, so think of the smell of a favorite flower, or seeing a plant associated with a loved one, or the taste of a favorite home-grown vegetable. These positive responses to plants will help set a direction to begin **#cultivating calm by gardening.**