

Gardening helps with mental health

Gardens can help us cope with life whether it's a new global virus or personal issues. If you have a garden you have a ready-made way to help you feel calmer and even improve your immune system and mood. Many of us will have more time at home than we usually do in the next few weeks; let your garden be part of your refuge.

Research shows that just being in nature reduces anger, fear and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally; it contributes to your physical wellbeing.

You may want to bring the joy of the garden inside by making a bouquet. Get creative. You don't need a lot of flowers; interesting branches and grasses can make a beautiful bouquet.

You can reap health benefits in the garden. Notice the flowers, the insects, the birds, the movement of the plants. All of them will connect you to the here and now. If you like to journal, consider sitting in the garden while doing so. It will make this quiet time even more restorative. Or you can simply brew yourself a cup of tea and take it outside to enjoy.

On the other hand, maybe you like to work off your anxiety through exercise. I'm sure that somewhere in your garden there are weeds to be pulled, plants to be pruned, or mulch to be applied. Each of these tasks is an opportunity to work off some stress.

For some folks, getting things done is a great way to reduce anxiety. If you're a regular gardener, you probably have a list of projects that you would like to get done...someday. How about tackling that storage shed you've been wanting to clean out for a while? Or removing a plant you don't like.

Whatever you do, stay calm and garden on!