

CATEGORY: POPULATIONS/HORTICULTURE PROGRAMS

Mental Health Populations and Plant-based Programs

Horticulture for health activities with mental health populations span the broad area of mental health and the diverse scope of horticulture for health. These include programs, gardens, treatment and recreation interventions, nutrition, and social engagement to name a few. The focus of these resources relate to plant-based programs used with mental health populations. These resources are not the definitive list, but will provide an overview of the breadth and range of populations, programs, and gardens.

The approach used for the Florida Horticulture for Health Network's Resource Hub has been to separate out some mental health areas where research and programming has been robust, providing a separate page of resources. These include (or will include) feeding-eating disorders, trauma, substance use disorders, and autism spectrum disorder. Mental health services are very broad and the organizing structure used in this category has been to break the services down by facilities utilizing horticultural therapy with mental health populations, specific treatment areas, and general mental health and wellbeing programs.

For related resources refer to category: Populations/Horticulture Programs in Specific Settings – Eating Disorders, Trauma Recovery etc.; category: Horticultural Therapy & Health Services.

Key Organizations

[Mental Health America](#)

[Mental Health Association of Central Florida](#)

Books, journals & epublications on mental health and plant-based programs

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*, 5th ed. American Psychiatric Association Publishing.

Etherington, N. (2012). *Gardening for children with autism spectrum disorders and special educational needs*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Haller, R., Kramer, K., & Capra, K. (Eds.) (2019). *The profession and practice of horticultural therapy*. CRC Press.

McGreeney, A. (2016). *With nature in mind: The ecotherapy manual for mental health professionals*.

Research & articles on mental health and plant-based programs

Recently published selected research & articles:

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Abbott A. (2021). COVID's mental-health toll: Scientists track surge in depression. *Nature* 590, 194–5. [10.1038/d41586-021-00175-z](https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-00175-z)

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Mental Illness

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Facilities

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Examples of mental health populations and plant-based programs: (all other categories)

Abe's Place is an Alzheimer's and memory care center that offers residential, day, community programs in Nashville, TN.

<https://www.abesgarden.org/>

Anne and Robert Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago uses a program called *Garden Play* to address pediatric mental health challenges like separation anxiety, loss of control & autonomy, among others where registered horticultural therapist delivers inpatient and family sessions.

<https://hursthouse.com/4-ways-gardening-helps-kids/>

Blair's Sanctuary Garden is a therapeutic garden for women veterans, including those experiencing PTSD, military sexual trauma (MST), and more in Tacoma, Washington. The program uses sustainable cropping and "farm to table" methods to grow organic food for those in need through MADF's Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank.

<https://themadf.org/programs/>

<https://www.dvnf.org/blairs-sanctuary-garden-helps-women-veterans-heal/>

Common Roots Woodside Urban Farm uses gardening as a way to improve mental wellbeing and build community through volunteer programming, skill building, and events at two locations in Nova Scotia, one on the site of Nova Scotia Psychiatric Hospital.

<https://commonrootsurbanfarm.ca/>

Freedom from Torture community garden, started in 1992 in Scotland, is part of the Natural Growth Project combining horticulture with psychotherapy.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/Gardens/2024/freedom-from-torture-garden>

Germany: Garden Therapy with Offenders with Mental Health Conditions symposium presentation by HT practitioner Rudiger Eckardt (2024) using the term accommodated persons for this population.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Kobi7Q1yN4>

Gould Farm is a 700-acre residential therapeutic farm assisting adults with mental health challenges in Monterey, Massachusetts.

<https://gouldfarm.org/>

Insight Garden Program partners with inmates across California to provide a curriculum in vocational gardening and landscape training.

<https://insightgardenprogram.org/>

Mental Health Center of Denver is a horticultural therapy program for children diagnosed with a range of mental health diagnoses.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AA-7oWBZU6Y>

Mount Saint Vincent, Denver, CO uses garden space and horticultural therapy in its neurosequential model of therapeutics for children who have experienced developmental trauma or neglect.

<https://www.htinstitute.org/blog/horticultural-therapy-connects-with-youth-at-the-mental-health-center-of-denver/>

Pacific Quest outdoor behavioural health care program for treatment of adolescents and young adults struggling with emotional and behavioural difficulties uses wilderness therapy, HT & neurodevelopmental approach to treatment.

<https://pacificquest.org/horticultural-therapy/>

Skyland Trail nonprofit mental health organization in Atlanta GA has residential and day treatment programs for adults with bipolar, schizophrenia, major depression, anxiety disorder and other diagnoses using adjunctive therapies including horticultural therapy, art and music.

<https://www.skylandtrail.org/our-programs/why-skyland-trail/holistic-mental-health-care/expressive-therapies/>

Stella's Circle in St. John's, NL, Canada, provides services including plant-based activity to adults experiencing mental health challenges, addictions, trauma, poverty, & homelessness.

<https://stellascircle.ca/>

The Garden's Healing Force's family counselor Morgan Myers suggests ways to cope with mental health challenges like burnout, stress and depression using nature-based activities including one collecting plant material representing burdens.

<https://eastdallastherapy.com/the-gardens-healing-force/>

The Hort/The Horticultural Society of New York is partnered with the Department of Corrections to provide a horticultural therapy program called *The GreenHouse* for inmates on Riker's Island.

<https://www.thehort.org/programs/greenhouse/>

The Phoenix Garden Project at Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, offers inmates an arts-based and nature-based curriculum through mindfulness, gardening, and landscape training.

<http://www.hmppgp.ca/>

The Pottle Centre is a social center for adults living with mental health issues, illnesses, and addictions using plant programming in St. John's, NL, Canada.

<https://pottlecentre.org/>

Thrive, based in the UK, uses a personal journey approach to treating people with mental health challenges, where horticulture-focused interventions support better health & wellbeing.

<https://www.thrive.org.uk/>

Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture in Atlanta, GA, uses food production to bring communities together through agriculture training, nutrition, and education.

<https://www.trulylivingwell.com/>

Unity Center for Behavioral Health, Oregon uses interdisciplinary teams for inpatient hospital patients with a range of mental health issues including trauma, PTSD, childhood trauma where plant-based strategies, HT interventions & its behavioral health garden address & treat issues.

https://naturesacred.org/sacred_place/unity-behavioral-health-garden/

Veterans' Growth charity in Tennessee helps ex-service personnel suffering from mental health issues using horticultural therapy and support.

<https://veteransgrowth.org/>

Vogel Alcove childcare center in Dallas, Tx works with homeless children experiencing mental health challenges where Look & Listen Sensory garden, Share & Care Vegetable garden, Bloom & Grow Wildlife garden support strategies addressing hypervigilance, altered sensory integration, chaos, & trauma.

<https://certified.natureexplore.org/vogel-alcove/>

Videos & webinars on mental health and plant-based programs

Addressing Mental Health Challenges Using Horticulture Programming [youtube] video by Morgan Whitaker Smith & Hillary Lindsay provides insights into this type of programming across mental health challenges.

<https://youtu.be/hxmNL9pPJLk>

Addressing Self-Regulation Challenges Using Horticultural Therapy & Therapeutic Horticulture [youtube] video by Lesley Fleming, HTR, Maureen Bethel & Tasha Roberts covers several populations that may have mental health issues: veterans, people with dementia, incarcerated & young children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6jHQpymkYA>

Blossom Programme: Nature-based Therapy for Survivors of Domestic Abuse [youtube] video was delivered as a 2023 American Horticultural Therapy Association conference session.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWDXLAluMSM&t=2s>

Can Horticultural Therapy Really Help in the Treatment of Mental Illness? explains the therapeutic gardens and this treatment modality beginning with early and current history.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ4JNonmW4k>

Cultivating Resiliency in Youth with Deep Nature Connections [youtube] video/webinar by JoAnn Yates, HTR offers plant-based activities & examples that have been effective with youth.

<https://youtu.be/ppWSeB8EEKY>

Horticultural Therapy at Rogers Behavioral Health uses greenhouse, gardens & horticultural therapy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9tmUDZ9odc>

Horticultural Therapy for Mental and Physical Health|Ask an Expert video provides info on stress and using plant-based & nature-based strategies for coping, building resiliency and promoting well-being.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MvpENZ92M4>

Inspiration from Loveland Youth Gardeners [youtube] video/webinar by Erica Wharton includes information on this type of programming for vulnerable youth & successes plant-based programming provides.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yEQ3kDy_uk

Mental Health Center of Denver – Horticultural Adolescent Therapy video shows its program, explaining why this modality works with this age group.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zes_tmc9f1M

Plants, the Microbiome, and Mental Health Tedx video provides info on the relationship between plants, diet, mental health in this ongoing field of study,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJG3zYqNgnE>

Prince William County Horticultural Therapy Program (video) at a psychosocial rehabilitation program supports adults with psychiatric and cognitive disabilities.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=En-UCpnUFLU>

The Role of Therapeutic Horticulture in Wellness and Recovery webinar by Gwenn Fried, NYU Langone Medical Center NYC shares history & definitions on therapeutic horticulture.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_M_8Y--9XA

THAD (Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Database) offers TH activities across populations & settings including people with mental health challenges (activities: care of houseplants, field trip to community garden, daily gardening tasks, exploring renewal & personal growth).
<https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/therapeutic-horticulture-activities-database/mental-health/>

Related organizations

Acknowledging contributions from participants of Florida Horticulture for Health Network's 2022 webinar Addressing Mental Health Challenges Using Horticulture Programming who identified programs for mental health populations.

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