

CATEGORY: LANDSCAPES FOR HEALTH: DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Restorative Gardens

“Restorative gardens in various forms (meditation, contemplation, sanctuary, memory gardens, and labyrinths) are designed to address cognitive, emotional, and/or psychological aspects of mental health (Diehl, 2013) and promote the feeling of being away, fascination, and compatibility, which Kaplan identifies as key components of mental restoration (1995)” (Fleming, 2021). Contemplative landscapes, and tools to measure these have emerged, bringing greater understanding to this topic (Boffi et al.,2022).

Restorative gardens are now including sensory gardens, cemeteries, war cenotaphs, and peace parks. The quiet garden movement, appearing around the globe, is promoting restorative spaces in urban and nature settings (Chang, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic and related mental health stress and anxiety has fostered greater interest in restorative spaces, both private and public. Studies suggesting Japanese gardens offer health benefits are appearing more recently in the literature (Locher & Bartholemew, 2022; Bellizi, 2022).

For related resources refer to Landscapes for Health category: designed landscape elements; therapeutic gardens; urban green spaces; and Horticultural Therapy & Health Services category: horticultural therapy.

Key Organizations

American Society of Landscape Architects – [Healthcare and Therapeutic Design Professional Practice Networks](#)

[Therapeutic Landscapes Network](#)

[The Center for Health Design](#)

[Quiet Parks International \(QPI\)](#)

Books, journals & epublications on restorative gardens

Ali, S.H. (2007). *Peace parks: Conservation and conflict resolution*. The MIT Press.

Carman, J. (2021). [Design for generations – Case studies](#).

Kaplan, R., & Kaplan, S. (1989). *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

Kavasch, E.B. (2002). *The medicine wheel garden: Creating sacred space for healing, celebration, and tranquility*. Bantam Books.

Marsh, P., & Williams, A. (2023). *Cultivated therapeutic landscapes gardening for prevention, restoration and equity*. Routledge.

Tidball, K.G., & Krasny, M.E. (Eds.). (2011). *Greening in the red zone: Disaster, resilience and community greening*. Springer.

Stuart-Smith, S. (2021). *The well-gardened mind: The restorative power of nature*. Simon and Schuster.

Verma, V., & Singh, I.P. (2023). *Restorative environment and well-being in a hospital through landscape design*. Preprints.

Research & articles on restorative gardens

Recently published selected research & articles:

- Bellizi, E. (2022). Restorative effects of Japanese gardens. *Well Being Journal*, 31(4).
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- Biglin, J. (2020). Embodied and sensory experiences of therapeutic space: Refugee place-making within an urban allotment. *Health Place*, 62, 102309.
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- Carrus, G., Scopelliti, M., Panno, A. et al. (2017). A different way to stay in touch with "Urban Nature": The perceived restorative qualities of botanical gardens. *Front. Psychol.*, 8, 914.
- Chang, W. (2022). [Taiwan unveils world's first 'certified quiet hiking trail'](#). *CNN.com*.
- Conniff, A., & Craig, T. (2016). A methodological approach to understanding the wellbeing and restorative benefits associated with greenspace. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 19, 103-09.
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- Dahlkvist, E., Engström, M., & Nilsson, A. (2020). Residents' use and perceptions of residential care facility gardens: A behaviour mapping and conversation study. *Int J Older People Nurs.*, 15(1), e12283.
- de Bell, S., White, M., Griffiths, A. et al. (2020). [Spending time in the garden is positively associated with health and wellbeing: Results from a national survey in England](#). *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 200.
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- Doherty, R. (2020). [How to design a restorative garden to lift your spirits](#). *Homes & Gardens*.
- Engemann, K., Pedersen, C.B., Arge, L. et al. (2019). Residential green space in childhood is associated with lower risk of psychiatric disorders from adolescence into adulthood. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA.*, 116(11), 5188-5193.
- Fleming, L., & Figueiredo, M. (2013). Healing gardens for cancer populations. *AHTA News Magazine*, 41(1), 12-13.
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- Forkner, L.E. (2021). [Bloedel Reserve helps Strolls for Well-Bring participants discover the healing power of nature closer to home](#). *Seattle Times*.
- Fumagalli, N., Fermani, E., Senes, G. et al. (2020). Sustainable co-design with older people: The case of a public restorative garden in Milan (Italy). *Sustainability*, 12(8), 3166.
- Goldstein, E., Topitzes, J., Brown, R.L., & Barrett, B. (2018). Meditative pathways of meditation and exercise on mental health and perceived stress: a randomized controlled trial. *J Health Psychol.*, 25, 1816-30.
- Hussein, H., Abidin, N.M.N.Z., & Omar, Z. (2016). Sensory gardens: A multidisciplinary effort. *Asian Journal of Behavioural Studies*, 1(1).
- Hussein, H. (2020). Design of sensory gardens for children with disabilities in the context of the United Kingdom. In M. Khan, S. Bell & J. Woods (Eds.), *Place, pedagogy and play: Participation, design and research with children*. Routledge.

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- Olszewska, A., Marques, P.F., Ryan, R.L., & Barbosa, F. (2018). What makes a landscape contemplative? *Environment and Planning*, 45(1), 7-25.
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- Xie, J., Luo, S., Furuya, K. et al. (2022). A preferred road to mental restoration in the Chinese classical garden. *Sustainability*, 14(8), 4422.
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Examples of restorative gardens

AIDS Memorial Grove San Francisco memorializes those who died of the disease in a nature-inspired setting.

<https://www.aidsmemorial.org/about>

Angel’s Garden at Virtua Hospital – Vorhees, NJ is an outdoor sanctuary garden for parents who have lost a baby, a place to honor their short lives.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/angels-garden-at-virtua-hospital-vorhees-nj/>

Benaroya Hall Garden of Remembrance Seattle is a memorial to 8,000+ Washington citizens who gave their lives in service of the U.S. since 1941 with reflecting pools and walls of granite.

<https://www.seattlesymphony.org/benaroyahall/about/garden-of-remembrance>

Bloedel Reserve at Bainbridge Island, Washington, Strolls for Well-Being program with a focus on nature connections providing healing, and personal growth are available to visitors.

https://bloedelreserve.org/nature_well-being/

Chanticleer, A Pleasure Garden, in Wayne, Pennsylvania is an example of a working garden that provides restorative experiences.

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

Children's Memorial Parks in Tucson Arizona has several sites where engraved names of children appear on granite walls at Children's Memorial Park, and on metal walls of the Children's Memorial Garden in Michael Perry Park, in Spanish and English.

<https://tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org/adopt-a-park-public-areas/other-programs/childrens-memorial-parks/>

Edgerton WI Hospital and its Health Services Healing Garden uses fragrant plants as the backbone of the healing process based on smellscape studies, with lemon verbena, pine scented geranium, valerian, viburnum Spiced Bouquet, mock orange, popcorn cassia,. Access to the garden is available at night and during the day.

<https://www.edgertonhospital.com/health-wellness/healing-garden/>

Elizabeth & Nona Evans Restorative Garden at Cleveland Botanical Garden promotes connections to nature, programming, and enabling features.

<https://www.asla.org/awards/2006/06winners/294.html>

Fine Family Contemplation Garden at Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Arizona, is one of many gardens within this large public garden.

<https://dbg.org/a-treasure-within-the-garden/>

Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Baltimore MD. and its labyrinth uses tall hedges in support of privacy, noise reduction and restoration for patients, staff, families and the public.

https://naturesacred.org/sacred_place/johns-hopkins-bayview-medical-center-2/

Joplin MO city's butterfly garden and park mark the place where homes were destroyed by a tornado, providing a restorative green space as a landscape of resiliency.

https://naturesacred.org/sacred_place/landscapes-of-resilience-butterfly-garden-overlook/

Juravinski Cancer Centre indoor garden, embedded in a chemotherapy suite, provides garden views within the treatment facility with a 18,000 lb. boulder as a symbol of strength.

<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/share/outdoor-spaces/>

Lighthouse Shelter Sacred Place garden in Annapolis, MD provides a sense of security and shield from the adjacent road by using decorated screens in its garden.

https://naturesacred.org/sacred_place/light-house-homeless-prevention-support-center/

Madeline Mission Memorial Children's Garden in Brunswick, on the Parkview campus of Mid Coast Hospital is a place other than a cemetery to remember children and babies using butterflies with names of their loved ones.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NsknUI6xFA&list=PLRqQz3pL4HQLVc4_zALMAe3P8CyVqzTiZ&index=2

Mercy Hospital South, St. Louis MO has a healing restorative garden designed with nature's colors.

<https://fox2now.com/news/st-louis-design-firm-creating-healing-gardens-for-hospitals/>

Portland Japanese Garden in Oregon suggests ways to experience the garden, enjoy a restorative time, participate in special events like Kintsugi – the restorative art of Naoko Fukumaru.

<https://japanesegarden.org/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-art-now/201712/the-japanese-garden-place-refuge>

The Rock Garden at the CIBC Breast Assessment Centre in Hamilton Ontario is like a hidden gem, a little hideaway at the medical facility, for use by people waiting to undergo testing or receive results.

<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/share/outdoor-spaces/>

Ruby Pardue Blackburn Adult Day Health Care Center in Wilkesboro, NC memory care garden.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/the-ruby-pardue-blackburn-adult-day-health-care-center-wilkesboro-nc/>

Saint Alphonsus COVID-19 Memorial Gardens honor healthcare workers, with 3 locations in Boise, Napa Ontario and Baker City, inspired by an Emily Dickinson Poem, and offering the gardens called *Where the Angels Are* for remembrance and reflection.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLumHUx6vKw&list=PLRqQz3pL4HQLVc4_zALMAe3P8CyVqzTiZ

Schneider Healing Garden adjacent to Seidman Cancer Center, Cleveland Ohio offers respite from treatment, city noise, the hospital setting, and includes sculptures, labyrinth, seating areas and night lighting.

<https://www.sculpturecenter.org/oosi/items/show/1384>

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Falls Church, VA welcomes people to their Sacred Places garden with peace poles decorated in many languages, representative of the diverse immigrant community.

https://naturesacred.org/sacred_place/st-anthonys-of-padua-catholic-church/

The Gift of Life Family House is used by transplant patients and their families, part of temporary lodging and supportive services.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/the-gift-of-life-family-house/>

The Tranquility Garden at McAuley Convent in Merion, PA provides a spiritual setting for elders and families as part of the retirement community for Sisters of Mercy.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/tranquility-garden-at-mcauley-convent/>

The Itabashi Japanese Garden in Burlington, Canada embodies commitment to mundialization (act of local authority declaring itself a world citizen, aware of global issues, sense of shared rights and responsibility), embodying cultural, recreational, social and spiritual goals.

<https://vburtdesigns.com/projects/healing-gardens/the-itabashi-garden/>

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Camden, NJ has a meditation garden for patients and families.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/virtua-camden-hospital/>

Wellbeing gardens take shape at Wisley. [RHS.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk).

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/health-and-wellbeing/articles/wellbeing-gardens-at-wisley>

Western Correctional Institute's Garden with an area called Well of Unspoken Truths provides restorative space for personal reflection in Cumberland, MD.

https://naturesacred.org/case_study/western-correctional-institution/

Videos, webinars & websites on restorative gardens

Hamilton Health Science's restorative outdoor gardens, at its multiple locations, were designed and installed for use by patients, staff, families, and the public. They include a gazebo, courtyard, playground, patios and more.

<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/share/outdoor-spaces/>

Healing Garden at Edward Hospital in Chicago is an example of healthcare gardens connecting with nature for use by all stakeholders.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5ZBa7zxw6M>

Nature Rx, humorous ad-spoof video series on the restorative benefits of engaging with nature.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/Nature-rxOrg>

Peace in the Park video examines the role parks and nature can play in health care of palliative care patients in a joint project with Mount Royal University, University of Alberta and Alberta Parks.

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

Portland Japanese Garden blog. (2020). *A garden's power to heal*.

<https://japanesegarden.org/2020/02/07/a-gardens-power-to-heal/>

Sensory Garden: Sight – Visual Interest in the Garden webinar from Trellis Scotland; speaker Joan Wilson shares insights into engaging nature in a garden setting using eyes, visual interest and visual perception.

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

THAD (Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Database) offers 200+TH activities across populations, tested by practitioners with a range of populations, some with a specific focus on restorative

activities (activities: [herbal tea](#), [growing mindful awareness in TH activities](#), [foot & hand “bath” with fresh herbs](#), [calming exercises in the garden](#)).

<https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/therapeutic-horticulture-activities-database/>

The Labyrinth- Community Cancer Center in Normal, IL. is used as a meditative tool for patients, staff and the public.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpgCUevFyp4>

Therapeutic and Healing Landscape Architecture from landscape designer J. Craven offers insights into design, history and characteristics of healing gardens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTM5nS7yYT8>

The Powerful Prescription of Nature by Kaiser Permanente.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL_izcz0R58&t=76s

Walter Reed Sensory Garden at Arlington County's Walter Reed Community Center: Arlington, Virginia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbLy1RgCk3Q&t=14s>

Related organizations

[Quiet Garden Movement UK](#)

[The Labyrinth Society](#)

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