

CATEGORY: LANDSCAPES FOR HEALTH: DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Therapeutic Gardens

“A therapeutic garden is designed for use as a component of a treatment, rehabilitation, or vocational program. A garden can be described as being therapeutic in nature when it has been designed to meet the needs of a specific user or population. It is designed to accommodate participant’s goals and to facilitate people-plant interactions.” (AHTA, 2021). Contemplative landscapes is a newer term that recognizes attributes that contribute to improved mood, emotional regulation, etc. (Olsweki et al., 2022). This study provided neuro-psychophysiological evidence of benefits from passive exposure to a therapeutic garden for the mental health of individuals with clinically concerning depressive disorders.

The literature includes population specific therapeutic gardens for cancer patients, youth, veterans and other populations. Therapeutic gardens may include horticultural therapy gardens, vocational rehabilitation farms, physical therapy garden, and reflexology paths. Recent publications written by geographers provide perspectives from this discipline, illustrating the scope of interest (Marsh & Williams, 2023). Research published in 2023 focused on hospital-based herb and vegetable garden for health care workers (Carroll et al., 2023), evidence-based design guidelines for therapeutic gardens tailored to elderly populations synthesizing reminiscence and preference studies (Herod et al., 2024), therapeutic garden design for community horticulture based on sensory experience needs and the use of hospital green spaces and landscape as sensory-therapeutic gardens (Jin et al., 2023; Dinu Roman Szabo et al., 2023), with other topics investigating the health impacts from therapeutic gardens.

Key Organizations

[American Horticultural Therapy Association](#)

[American Society of Landscape Architects \(ASLA\) Professional Practice](#) with forums for health challenges/populations

Books, journals & epublications on therapeutic gardens

Ajibade, A.T. (2020). *Integrating the natural healing process for post-traumatic stress disorder treatment in veterans through a healing garden*. West Virginia University.

Chalfont, G. (2007). *Design for nature in dementia care*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Cooper Marcus, C., & Sachs, N. (2013). *Therapeutic landscapes: An evidence-based approach to designing healing gardens and restorative outdoor spaces*. Wiley.

Jeffries, S. (2023). *Designing, planting and using a therapeutic garden*. The Crowood Press.

Marsh & Williams (Eds.). (2023). *Cultivated therapeutic landscapes*. Routledge.

Winterbottom, D., & Wagenfeld, A. (2015). *Therapeutic gardens: Design for healing spaces*. Timber Press.

Research & articles on therapeutic gardens

Recently published selected research & articles:

Allahyar, M., & Kazemi, F. (2021). [Landscape preferences of a children’s hospital by children and therapists](#). *Urban Forestry & Greening*, 58.

American Horticultural Therapy Association. (2021). [Definitions and positions](#).

Ameli, R., Skeath, P., Abraham, P.A. et al. (2021). A nature-based health intervention at a military healthcare center randomized, controlled, cross-over study. *Peer Journal*, 9, e10519.

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- Davis, B.E. (2011). Rooftop hospital gardens for physical therapy: A post-occupancy evaluation. *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, 4(3), 14-43.
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- Fleming, L. (2020). Therapeutic garden tips for home gardeners. *National Garden Bureau*.
- Galbo, S.C. (n.d.). 'All my hurts my garden spade can heal': Horticultural therapy, present & future. *Lit Med Magazine*.
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- Hastuti, A.S.O. (2020). Healing garden therapy: A phenomenology of holistic healing for patients. *3rd SPUP International Research Conference Journal*.
- Hazen, T. (2007). Therapeutic garden characteristics. *American Horticultural Therapy Association*.
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Examples of therapeutic gardens

Anarchy Zone at the Ithaca Children's Garden.

<https://www.ithacachildrengarden.org/visit-the-garden/about-the-garden/hands-on-nature-anarchy-zone/>

Anne and Robert Lurie Children's Hospital Crown Sky garden in Chicago, IL.

<https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/patients-visitors/visiting-lurie-childrens/tour-the-hospital/family-community-destinations/crown-sky-garden/>

Baltimore Washington Medical Center's healing garden in Glen Burnie MD is viewed from the infusion area.

<https://www.umms.org/bwmc/giving/support-a-cause/support-cancer-care-at-um-bwmc/healing-garden>

Banner Gateway Medical Center, Phoenix AR women's garden is designed for community healing.

https://www.eastvalleytribune.com/news/hospitals-gardens-help-the-healing/article_d7a7927a-8ae2-5a43-afc9-918f9e7a2d5f.html

Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital uses its large greenhouse for therapeutic and community outreach programs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvDhD6JFoUs>

Insight Garden Program uses innovative programming in vocational gardening and landscaping skills training for people in prison to reconnect with self, community, and the natural world.

<https://insightgardenprogram.org/>

Legacy Emanuel Children's Garden, Portland Oregon is a 9,000 sq. ft garden for pediatric patients and families with play areas, quiet spaces and is used for therapeutic programming.

<https://www.asla.org/portland/Site.aspx?id=43609>

Legacy Health's research on Health Workforce Well-being to Optimize the Work Environment with funding from HRSA involves their therapeutic gardens.

https://physicianwellness.ucsd.edu/_files/knowledge-hub-files/Funding%20Research%20JAMA%202023%20jama_melnick_2023_vp_230014_1677095690.81075.pdf

Mary's Woods Garden seniors' facility in Portland OR., in partnership with Legacy Health received AHTA Therapeutic Garden Award in 2023.

<https://maryswoods.org/healing-garden-design-award/>

Olsen Family Garden, St. Lois Children's Hospital, Missouri - the 18th floor garden in the hospital is used for therapeutic and restorative purposes.

http://www.virtually-anywhere.net/tours/stlouis/main/vtour/index.html?startscene=scene_Olson_Family_Garden

Oregon State Hospital mental health facility uses a greenhouse as part of its therapeutic vocational program for patients.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/OSH/FRIENDS/Pages/360-photos/JC-TX-160-Greenhouse.aspx>

Palo Alta VA Medical Center's 800 bed facility addresses polytrauma patients undergoing rehabilitation in its gardens which were specifically designed using evidence-based guidelines.

<http://www.meiarchitects.com/projects/va-palo-alto-healing-garden/>

Peace River Center- Nan Langston Therapeutic Garden was installed in 2023 at the Children's Resiliency Campus in Williamsburg Square Lakeland FL.

<https://www.peacrivercenter.org/honoring-nan/>

Randall Children's Hospital Legacy Emanuel level 1 trauma research garden serves patients, family and staff needs using evidence-based design.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ldHaKgHhsM>

The Green Road project for military members uses therapeutic space for healing, incorporating research, self-guided strategies and connections to nature.

<https://vimeo.com/257400358>

Virtua Camden Hospital Meditation Garden was designed for therapeutic programs for children with horticultural therapy, meditation and therapeutic garden, integrated into health care services at this healthcare setting.

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

Warrior and Family Support Center and Freedom Park in San Antonio TX for prosthetic and traumatic brain injury patients is built as a refuge; many return to this health facility and benefits from its active use garden, therapy garden, freedom parkway, outdoor kitchen, purple heart garden, and play space.

<https://sanantonio.uso.org/san-antonio-warriorcenter>

Therapy Garden at Merwick was developed for use by physical, occupational, speech and horticultural therapists, with walking paths, therapy care, raised planters and other accessible features.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/therapy-garden-at-merwick/>

Videos, webinars & websites on therapeutic gardens

Therapeutic gardens in North Carolina webpage lists several therapeutic gardens.

<https://therapeutic-hort.ces.ncsu.edu/therapeutic-hort-gardens/>

Legacy Therapy Garden in Portland Oregon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6fRgrOJCoA>

www.legacyhealth.org/gardens

[Sensory plants for therapeutic gardens.](#) Webinar by Susan Morgan on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2fSqLVuZq8>

Healthcare facilities: Healing gardens in healthcare webinar hosted by Boston Society of Architects/AIA (2021) has 3 experts talking about gardens at Brigham Young Hospital, Spaulding Rehab Hospital, and Boston Medical roof garden.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vJID_tW5W8

Veterans Therapeutic Garden at Raymond G. Murphy Medical Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico includes allied health professionals and their services with a focus on challenges faced by veterans.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbt91HH-eTs>

Wilmot Botanical Gardens is an oasis on UF's campus. Situated in the bustling health science center portion of campus, the garden and its greenhouse serve as a respite for patients and their caregivers at UF Health.

<https://wilmotgardens.med.ufl.edu/>

National Park Board of Singapore Therapeutic Gardens: In this edition of *NParks*, therapeutic gardens are presented as woven into Singapore green outdoor gardens, and scientifically designed to meet physical, psychological and social needs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYu4la7WZLI>

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska: Patients partake in gardening activities as part of their healing process.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffAclfou2GU>

The Healing Gardens at Siskin Hospital at Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation, Chattanooga, TN.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIVaLgiz58&t=263s>

Related organizations

Organizations that are population specific (i.e. *American Cancer Society, Alzheimer's Associations*)

Written & compiled by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan Nov 2021; revised in 2022 by Lesley Fleming, Siang Tham. Revised in 2023 by Leah Diehl, Lesley Fleming, Bree Stark. Revised in 2024 by Lesley Fleming, Leah Diehl & Joanna Brown.