



Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc

Newsletter – Summer edition



Thrive UK, Therapeutic Garden, Battersea Park, London UK

This issue has an article “Gardens for all”, summarizing the wide range of benefits of gardens and gardening. It provides many tips and ideas of how to utilize gardens for our wellbeing. Also, there is some information on the recent Workshop conducted in November.

Some gardening tips: With the hot weather, it's worth giving those plants that are suffering, a pick me up such as Seasol. Make sure the gardens are well mulched. For those plants that have been burnt, a light prune to remove the damaged leaves will also give your plants a boost.

Good reading.

Paul de la Motte

Plants for Sensory and Therapeutic Gardens

By Paul de la Motte

Common Name: **Wisteria**

Botanical Name: *Wisteria sinensis*

Family: Fabaceae

Wisteria is one of the most striking flowering climbers in Victorian gardens.

Originally from parts of Japan, China and Korea, the Wisteria genus consists of around 10 species of deciduous climbing plants. They come in a large range of colours. The most common is the original mauve to violet, but there are also pink and pure varieties.

The most common, *Wisteria sinensis* is a vigorous flowering deciduous climber that can easily spread 8-10 metres or more and climb to over 10 metres.



A white Wisteria on a deck

Wisteria can thrive in poor soils but prefers rich well drained soils. Being in the Fabaceae family allows them to have nitrogen fixing properties so they benefit most from low nitrogen fertilizer. They need little fertilizer but benefit from potash to ensure maximum flowering.

Wisteria is one of those plants that can take your breath away. When in flower they have a wonderful scent and can flower from spring all through summer.

As they grow vigorously they require strong support on verandahs and pergolas. The largest Wisteria in Japan covers 1990 square metres which is approximately half an acre.

Wisteria grow from cuttings and are very hardy once established. Their growth can be limited by growing in pots and they can also be successfully pruned as standards.

The therapeutic value of Wisteria lies in its sensory characteristics as well as its ability to be used for activities such as taking cuttings. In China, the Wisteria flower is commonly featured in art and plays involving marriage. Many people exchange the flowers as a good luck charm when planning a wedding.

In Summary, Wisteria is a great plant to include in your garden, but needs to be kept under control.

Therapeutic Gardening Workshop – Holmesglen TAFE 23 November 2018

A workshop was run in November for members and non members at the Waverley campus of Holmesglen TAFE in Glen Waverley.

Subjects covered a presentation from Campbell Sinclair about the William Buckland Garden at the Alfred Hospital and plans for a new hospital garden at the Sandringham Hospital.

The workshop also included a number of activities and a session on Sensory/ therapeutic Garden design.



Newly planted garden bed at William Buckland Garden, Alfred Hospital, Melbourne

Further workshops are scheduled for this year in different regions, including metropolitan Melbourne and Country areas.

Details will be included in following issues.

Gardens for all - a healthy activity

This article was developed by the HTAV for the better health channel and is a good reminder and summary of the benefits of plants and gardening for us all.

Whether you are a home gardener, a community gardener or a visitor, a garden can be a source of exercise, stimulation and relaxation.

Most people enjoy being outdoors and digging in the soil, creating and watching plants grow. People with disabilities, people who are unwell, older people and children can find it especially rewarding to spend time in the garden tending plants and growing their own food.

Working in the garden provides benefits that include:

- Enjoyment – from the physical activity
- Exercise – improves your endurance, strength, mobility and flexibility, and mental health
- Relaxation – helps you relax and reduce stress levels
- Fresh food – provides you and your family with a healthy variety of inexpensive fresh food.

With a little planning, garden beds, equipment and tools can be modified to make gardening accessible for children, older people and people with disabilities.



Respite Centre Garden – Forest Hill, Victoria

Getting involved in gardening can be as simple as:

- Going for a walk in a garden with a friend
- Creating your own small pot garden or larger vegetable garden
- Getting involved in a community gardening group
- Supporting a friend or neighbour by helping to tend their garden
- Volunteering – for example, in a school or public garden.

Gardening improves fitness and health

Most people can benefit from creating a garden – it is an enjoyable form of activity, maintains mobility and flexibility, and encourages use of all motor skills through walking, reaching, bending, digging, planting seeds and taking cuttings.

Gardening improves endurance and strength, reduces stress levels and promotes relaxation. It can also provide stimulation and interest in the outdoors. Just being in the garden can create a sense of wellbeing.

Learning in the garden

Whatever your age or level of ability, you can enjoy gardening, have fun and develop new skills, including:

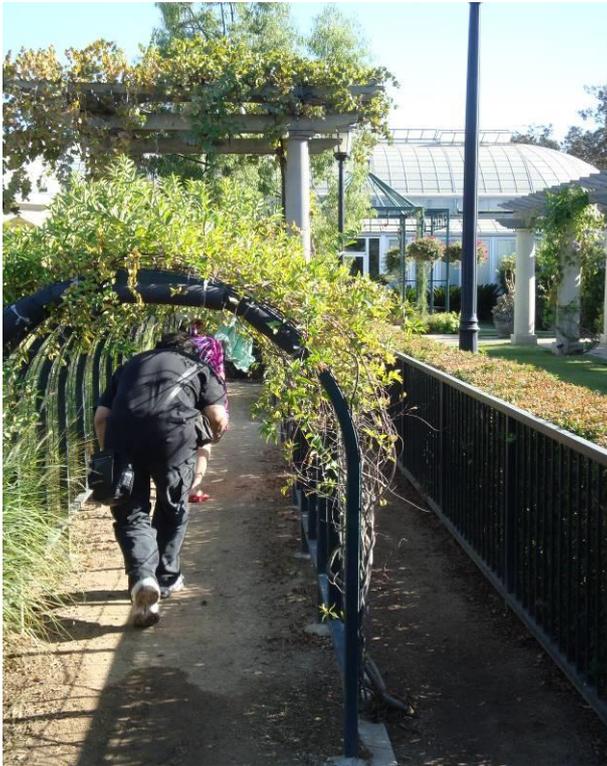
- Responsibility – from caring for and tending plants
- Understanding – learning about cause and effect (for example, plants die without water)
- Self-confidence – from achieving goals and enjoying the food you have grown
- Love of nature – from learning about the outdoor environment in a safe and pleasant place
- Reasoning and discovery – learning about the science of plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and simple construction
- Physical activity – which is fun and good for your fitness
- Cooperation – including shared activity and teamwork
- Creativity – from finding new and exciting ways to grow food
- Nutrition – learning about sources of fresh food and how to cook the food you grow in the garden.



Latrobe Hospital Garden – Latrobe Valley, Victoria

Family gardening

By gardening as a family, adults can share their skills and knowledge with children, and family members can learn together. This creates a fun and nurturing environment for everyone, as well as being a source of healthy physical activity.



Childrens garden and activity centre - Huntington, California , USA

Children love to grow interesting plants such as sunflowers, tomatoes, strawberries and corn. For younger children, their first activities in the garden may be digging in the dirt and playing with mud. As well as the gardening you do as a family, create a space in the garden that belongs to your children.

Community gardening

Working in a community garden can give you a sense of belonging. The benefits of community gardens include:

- Knowledge sharing
- Social activity – meet local people and develop friendships
- Physical activity
- Participation and communication
- Activities that foster self-help
- Nutritional health
- Supportive environments that promote social inclusion (for example, for frail, older people, people with disabilities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds)



Community Garden - Melbourne

Gardening and mental health

Gardening is good for your mental health. Simply being in a garden can lift your spirits, particularly if you spend a lot of time indoors.

Gardening with others in a community garden can give you a sense of purpose and drive to achieve an end goal. It also provides a sense of belonging and acceptance for those who may otherwise feel isolated.

Gardening can help with depression in several ways, including:

- Being outdoors in a pleasant environment
- Working with other people and reducing isolation
- Caring for plants and investing in their future
- Experiencing the joy and satisfaction of harvesting produce from the garden

Visiting gardens

Visiting a garden can give you a great sense of wellbeing. It can relax your mind and help reduce stress levels.

Walking around a garden or park will help keep you fit, which can improve your enjoyment of life. Take a friend or visit with your family to make it a social activity.



Sensory garden – Ashgrove (Gold Coast), Queensland

Things to remember

- Wear a hat when working outside
- Keep hydrated when the weather is warm
- Be careful when lifting heavy objects (protect your back)
- Enjoy your garden, and take time to smell the roses.

Therapeutic Gardening Short Courses

Therapeutic Gardening Basic (One Day)
Saturday, 18 May 2019 9.00am – 4.30pm

Advanced Therapeutic Gardening (One Day)
Saturday, 25 May 2019 9.00am – 4.30pm

Holmesglen Institute, 595 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley Registration: (03) 9564 1546
<http://www.holmesglen.edu.au> Short Courses, House and Garden.

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