

Gardening gets you and your loved ones outdoors for exercise and time together

Gardening is good for you in many ways. Besides giving you better views to enjoy, gardening improves your physical, nutritional and mental health.

Here's how, courtesy Bonnie Plants, a label you'll see on many vegetable and herb plants available for spring and summer planting at garden centers nationwide.

Power of sunlight. When you work in the yard, the sun helps the body make vitamin D, which is essential for healthy bones and may slow the progression of osteoporosis. The positive powers of sunlight also work on the mind.

Physical fitness. To reap the benefits of gardening, you have to do more than just patter about. The most energetic activities in terms of calories used are digging and shoveling. If you spend 30 minutes on either of these activities, you burn 200-360 calories.

Staying mentally alert. Gardening gives you an opportunity to exercise your mind and your hands, and there's always something new to learn from your garden. Learning new skills is a sure-fire way to keep the brain alert.

Reducing stress levels. Researchers find that just walking through a beautiful sensory garden lowers stress levels. The sensory garden is thought to have the same effects on the mind as art therapy. But it isn't just doing some gardening that reduces the stress. Soaking up the colors, sounds and smells of your garden and taking time to appreciate the peace and tranquility also removes tension.

Better nutrition. Gardening also provides you with fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs, all of which are healthy and taste better than store bought. Fruits, herbs and vegetables stimulate the heart and get the blood flowing, making your mind and body work better together as one. They also decrease the deterioration of an aging mind, and they are powerful in antioxidants which the body needs in order to fight diseases.

Learn more at BonniePlants.com