Caregiver News – 5/2020

Coronavirus Stay-at-Home Gardening Tips
https://caregiver.com/articles/gardening-coronavirus

While people are urged to stay home to help contain the spread of COVID-19, many are turning to a popular hobby – gardening. Working in a garden can help build up physical and mental strength while passing the time and making the trips to the grocery store less frequent. Baylor College of Medicine experts share important information on gardening.

Gardening provides an abundance of health benefits for people of all ages, said Roberta Anding, registered dietitian and assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at Baylor. People are likely to consume additional servings of fruits and vegetables grown in their own garden. It can also be a strengthening activity for elders, whether they are in strong physical shape or not.

“When we think of traditional nutrition, we think fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes or watermelon – but don’t discount herbs and spices. They’re plants too,” Anding said. “Basil, mint and rosemary all have protective compounds of phytochemicals or polyphenols that are very nutritious.”

Anding provides basic gardening tips and outlines the benefits to growing your own food:

• The more diverse the colors, the more diverse are the protective plant-based compounds.
• Because food is so fresh from the garden, people who are picky with fruits and vegetables may like the flavor of fresh grown fruits and vegetables more than produce from the grocery store.
• Ugly does not mean there is a lack of nutritional value. Don’t discard “ugly” produce unless an insect or animal got into it or chewed it up.
• Always wash your hands and your produce after digging around the garden, even if you don’t use traditional pesticides.

Studies show that people who grow their own fruits and vegetables have a healthier diet. Regardless of age, anyone can enjoy gardening indoors or outdoors.

“Elders who can’t get outside can garden with plants in the house or even arrange artificial flowers,” said Dr. Angela Catic, assistant professor in the Huffington Center on Aging and fellowship director of geriatric medicine at Baylor.

Catic explains that gardening is a great exercise, no matter your mobility level:

• Gardening provides cardiovascular benefits, as well as strengthening and flexibility.
• Getting outside to garden is a great way to get vitamin D, which many older adults lack.
• Gardening can reduce agitated or anxious behaviors for patients with dementia. Being outside in nature can also reduce stress and cortisol levels.
• Wear appropriate clothing: wide-brimmed hat, shoes with a good gripping sole, gloves to protect skin from thorn pricks or scratches. Remember to apply sunscreen and hydrate.
• Use a bench for comfort instead of kneeling or bending over.
• Gardening can be a beneficial hobby to take on while staying home throughout this global crisis, so hose off those garden supplies.
VIRTUAL
Dementia Caregivers Support Group

Do you care for someone diagnosed with dementia? A support group provides emotional, educational and social support.

Topics include:
- Communication techniques
- Caregiver support
- Benefits of activities
- Stages of disease
- Family dynamics
- Safety issues

When:
Mondays: 10am, Tuesdays: 3pm, Wednesdays: 10am, & Fridays: 2pm
*Starting Wednesday, March 18, these will be offered on a week-by-week basis.

To join Hartford HealthCare’s Virtual Meeting Room,
Call: 860.972.6338. Access code: 19623#.

Facilitated by:
Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging’s
Certified Dementia Specialists

For more information, please call 877.424.4641. No RSVP needed.
COVID Coach is a free, easy-to-use mobile application created for everyone, including Veterans and Servicemembers, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It was developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2020. The app connects you to resources to help you cope with stress, stay healthy, stay connected, and navigate parenting, caregiving, and working at home while social distancing or sheltering in place. COVID Coach is not meant to replace professional care related to COVID-19 or mental health conditions, such as PTSD.

LEARN ABOUT COPING DURING THE PANDEMIC

COVID Coach can support you with information to help you stay balanced, connected, safe, healthy, and sane.

- Learn about healthy behaviors to protect yourself during the pandemic
- Find tips to help you with remote working, parenting, and caregiving
- Explore indoor activities to do on your own, with a partner, or with children

MANAGE SELF-CARE AND WELL-BEING

Find tools to help you manage stress during the pandemic. You can also mark the activities that are your favorites and create your own tools.

- Practice relaxation and other stress-management exercises
- Track your mood, anxiety level, well-being, and stress symptoms over time to recognize patterns and figure out what works for you
- Create your own personal support network

SET PERSONAL GOALS AND TRACK GROWTH

Creating a goal for yourself—something you can do on a daily basis to help you take care of yourself—and tracking your growth is a helpful way to focus on the positive.

- Set personal goals, small things to help yourself, a family member, or a friend
- View graphs that show your growth over time
- Set reminders to visit the app each day and work toward your goals

GET SUPPORT

If you’re in crisis, use COVID Coach to connect with people who can help. There are also resources available if you just want to talk. Add contact information for people you trust and reach out when you need support.

For more information, visit: www ptsd va gov appvid mobile

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National Center for PTSD

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
2020 Schedule

All support groups have been postponed until further notice.

If you have any questions please speak with Robin at 860-887-3561 ext. 124

Senior Resources
AGENCY ON AGING

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www.SeniorResourcesEC.org

This program is supported by Senior Resources-Agency on Aging with Title III funds made available under the Older American’s Act
We hope you find the May edition of our Caregiver newsletter informative.

Senior Resources currently produces a monthly caregiver newsletter. We are looking for feedback on any ideas you may have for future editions.

Please contact Robin Brewer with any ideas/suggestions or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

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To read previous editions of this newsletter please visit: www.SeniorResourcesEC.org/stay-informed/caregiver-newsletter