



## Put a little love in your heart with horticulture therapy

Laura DePrado, Final Touch Plantscaping Published 12:00 p.m. ET Feb. 19, 2018



This month's Horticultural Therapy activity theme is “Put a Little Love in Your Heart,” bouquets and heart containers designed for all ages and abilities. (Photo: ~Courtesy of Laura DePrado)

February offers fun in anticipation of the groundhog and whether he will see his shadow, and whether winter will continue for six more weeks, or spring will arrive early. Next, Valentine’s Day takes over where the groundhog left off, and hearts and flowers arrive.

Monthly calendar events, celebrations and holidays, along with plant materials associated with the seasons, are used in horticultural therapy activities and programs.



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This month, my activity theme is "Put a Little Love in Your Heart," with two corresponding activities designed for all ages and abilities. The first is heart bouquets, for which participants remove flowers of their choice from a single large arrangement.

I share with the participants, "Everyone wants to give and get love and there are many different kinds of love." Clients and staff are instantly drawn to the sight and fragrance of large red roses and assorted greens.

They start talking and sharing what they love. They share a memory, or talk about a loved one, living or deceased as they handle their flowers and arrange them.

In our second activity, participants engage with potpourri of dried flowers of roses, carnations, lavender and hydrangeas, and place in heart-shaped containers. Horticultural therapy connects people to the wonders of nature in purpose and meaning.



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Plants and people go together. No matter the time of year there will always be plants and the seasonal rhythms of plant life cycles and people who respond to the life cycles and the seasonal rhythms.

The healing benefits of working with plants are powerfully simple. Experts agree that working with a plant or in a garden can relieve, or reduce stress, improve mood, heal physical or emotional wounds, rehabilitate injured muscles, improve motor skills and increase coordination.

Horticultural therapy can and does bring out the best in people. Plants depend on people for survival. They rely on the person for nutrients and care. People benefit from taking care of plants, as it is our natural response to be needed, and to nurture, and to develop a sense of responsibility for the livelihood of plants.

**READ:** [National Gardening Bureau offers grants for 2018](#)

In hundreds of places around the country, working with plants is a powerful and beneficial form of therapy for people of all ages. A greenhouse or activity room is an inviting, non-threatening place to bring people and plants together, and offers a refreshing diversion from clinical areas of a hospital or healthcare facility to something more pleasant and comfortable.

The use of plants in guided and purposeful and meaningful activities can and does help a person or patient adjust to a confined living situation and become more relaxed, and thereby be more receptive to other forms of treatment that may be necessary for recovery.

There is nothing more beautiful and gratifying than being around a table of people from ages 6 to 106 at any stage of life connecting and engaging with plants where everyone is equal.

**READ:** [Gardener State: Revising NJ Wildlife Action Plan](#)

Plants do not discriminate or judge on age, gender, educational background, social status, religion, culture or circumstance. Knowledge of horticulture, and experience in gardening is not a prerequisite, and a “green thumb” is not required. Success and social connections bloom with a little love in your heart.