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## Head of Programmes

### Garden Organic



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# Growing Health

- Project run by Garden Organic and Sustain, funded by the Tudor Trust
- To get food growing to be more routinely used to deliver health outcomes
- Identify barriers & solutions
- Finding ways to make it happen



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# Why isn't NHS commissioning food growing?

## NHS & Public Health

- Lack of awareness of food growing and the benefits
- Unsettled times and new structures
- Need measurable outcomes and impact

## Food Growing Groups

- Don't have the contacts or awareness of routes to commissioning
- Not set up to make it easy, partners and measuring outcomes



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# Finding ways to make it happen

- Evidence of benefits – literature and practical examples
- Tools to measure outcomes
- Case studies
- Reaching health professionals and health commissioners
- Support for food growing groups



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# Evidence for health and wellbeing



**The benefits of gardening and food growing for health and wellbeing**

By Garden Organic and Sustain  
Ulrich Schmutz, Margi Lennartsson, Sarah Williams, Maria Devereaux and Gareth Davies  
April 2014

## Gardening and food growing for healthy weight

**Gardening and food growing help to achieve and maintain healthy weights by influencing:**

- Fruit and vegetable consumption; Nelson *et al.*, 2007; Alaimo *et al.* 2008; Nelson *et al.*, 2011
- Physical activity Hawking *et al.*, 2013; Park *et al.*; 2008
- Body mass index Zick *et al.* 2013

**Background**

The Government's obesity strategy 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People'; a call to action on obesity in England' has identified that 'overweight and obesity represent probably the most widespread threat to health and wellbeing' (Department of Health, 2011). 61% of adults are overweight or obese, and 23% of 4-5 year olds and 33% of 10-11 year olds. The level of obesity in England, along with the rest of the UK, ranks as one of the most obese nations in Europe. It is the consequence of overweight and obesity that makes these statistics so serious, as excess weight is a major risk factor for diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Alongside the serious ill-health it provokes, overweight can reduce people's prospects in life affecting self-esteem and mental health (Department of Health, 2011).

Excess weight gain is the result of eating more calories than needed and/or undertaking insufficient levels of physical activity to match the calorie intake. Although this energy imbalance is driven by complex environmental, physiological and behavioural factors, changes in diet to reduce energy intake along with increasing physical activity are key to achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline on obesity includes advice for people to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day in place of foods higher in fat and calories, and to make enjoyable physical activities part of everyday life. Engagement in gardening and food growing can address both of these recommendations and gardening is indeed recognised as moderate-intensity physical activity that adults are advised to undertake 30 minutes or more of on five or more days of the week (NICE, 2006).

**Evidence of impact of gardening and food growing on:**

**i) Fruit and vegetables consumption**

Reviews of academic studies from the UK and abroad, concluded that food growing programmes in schools can have positive impacts on pupil nutrition and attitudes towards healthy eating, specifically related to willingness to try new foods and taste preferences (Nelson *et al.*, 2011; Draper and Freedman, 2010). For example, a study carried out in the USA 11-12 year old students involved in food growing over a four month period found that students were more willing to taste, and ate, a greater variety of vegetables than those in the control group (Ratcliffe *et al.*, 2011). Lineberger and Zajack (2000), also in the USA, reported more positive attitudes towards vegetables and increased snack preference for fruit and vegetables amongst 8-11 year old students involved in hands-on school gardening programmes. Evaluation of Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) in the UK showed significant associations between healthy eating and FFLP related behaviours (including participation in cooking and growing at school or at home); following their participation in FFLP the proportion of primary school-age children eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables increased by 28% (Orme *et al.*, 2011). Nelson *et al.* (2011) reported details of a number of studies demonstrating that pupils engagement in food growing activities resulted in increased consumption of vegetables, but also noted that most of the studies only considered whether pupils consumption habits had changed as an immediate effect of their involvement in growing and highlighted the lack of longitudinal evidence research confirming whether such programmes can change eating habits longer term.

For adults, Alaimo *et al.* (2008), reported that household members who participated in community gardening consumed fruits and vegetables 1.4 more times per day than those that did not and that they were 3.5 times more likely to consume the recommended 5 portions a day of fruits and vegetables. In the UK, the low-income diet and nutrition survey (Nelson *et al.*, 2007) showed that men and women living in households that grew food consumed more fruit and vegetables than other men and women.

## Gardening and growing for people with dementia

**Being in a garden and taking part in horticultural activities has been shown to be of benefit for people with dementia, with structured therapeutic gardening activities having a positive impact on senses of wellbeing, cognitive abilities, communication and engagement.** DeWeiler *et al.*, 2012 and Hewitt *et al.*, 2015.

**Background**

Dementia is a long-term condition with a high impact on a person's health, personal circumstances and family life. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and is generally diagnosed in people over 70 years of age. Early-onset dementia refers to the onset of symptoms before the age of 65. As well as having profound impact on the individual, dementia can also have high impact on family members and friends. Dementia results in a progressive decline in multiple areas of function including memory, reasoning, communication skills and those skills needed to carry out daily activities. Alongside this decline, individuals may develop behavioural and psychological symptoms such as depression, psychosis, aggression and wandering, which complicate care.

The National Dementia Strategy (2009), aims to ensure that improvements are made to dementia services across three areas: improved awareness, earlier diagnosis and intervention, and a higher quality of care (Department of Health, 2009). The Alzheimer's Society statistics show that there are currently 800,000 people living with dementia in the UK, and it is predicted that this number will rise to over one million people by 2021. It is estimated that dementia currently costs the NHS, local authorities and families £29 billion a year and this will grow to £27 billion by 2018 (Kane and Cook 2013). The Alzheimer's Society notes that low-level support services such as gardening clubs are vital, and reduce the need for more intrusive and costly care solutions (Kane and Cook, 2013).

**Evidence of benefits of horticultural therapy for people with dementia**

The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that care plans should address activities of daily living that maximise independent activity, adapt and enhance function, and minimize need for support (NICE, 2011). The garden and the activity of gardening provides a non-pharmacological approach to address these goals and horticultural therapy can be utilized to improve the quality of life for the aging population and yielded high level patients' career satisfaction, possibly reducing costs of long-term, assisted living and dementia unit residents (DeWeiler *et al.* 2012; Gitlin *et al.* 2012).

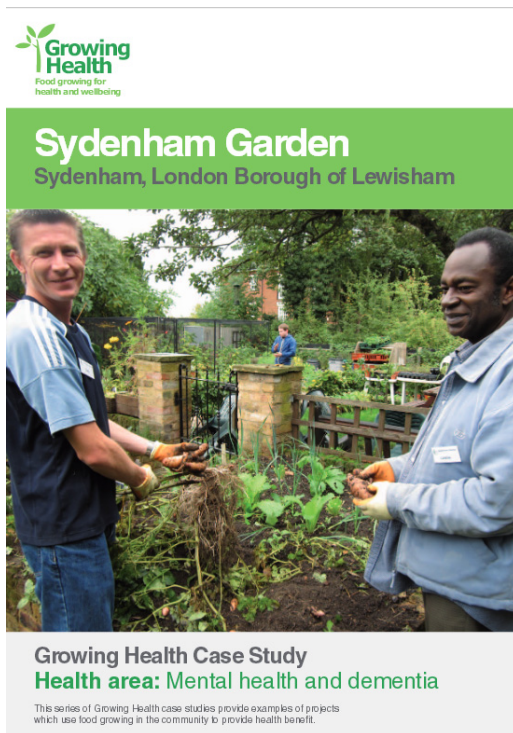


*Gydenkærn garden sow and grow group*

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# Case studies



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# Community growing groups

Share and learn events

On-line tool kit

Case studies

Seminars – food growing groups/commissioners at local level

Evidence of the benefits of food growing for health



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# Health Professionals / Commissioners

Raise awareness

Seminars – food growing groups/commissioners at local level

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