



Food growing for
health and wellbeing

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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
- Advisory group
- 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



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Gardening and growing for people with dementia

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Being in a garden and taking part in horticultural activities has been shown to benefit people with dementia, with observed benefits including activities having a positive impact on memory, wellbeing, cognition, attention, communication and engagement. (Duckworth et al., 2012 and Health et al., 2013)

Background

Dementia is a long-term condition with a high impact on a person's health, personal independence 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 significant 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. Although the decline, individual 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 assessment, earlier diagnosis and intervention, and a higher quality of care. (Department of Health 2009) The Alzheimer's Society has also shown that there are currently 800,000 people living with dementia in the UK, and it is predicted that the number will rise to over

one million people by 2020. It is estimated that dementia currently costs the NHS, Social Services and to others £22 billion a year and will grow to £27 billion by 2018 (Paine and Cook 2010). The Alzheimer's Society notes that the Health Assembly in its framework action recognises that low level support services such as gardening clubs, a vital and reduce the need for more specialist and costly care solutions. (Paine and Cook 2010).

Evidence of benefits of horticultural therapy for people with dementia

The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that care plans for people with dementia should include activities of daily living that maximize independent activity, adapt and enhance function, and increase 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 indeed high level journal case studies, provide convincing evidence of long term, sustained living and dementia unit residents. (Duckworth et al 2012, Gills et al 2010).



People participating in a garden group

The benefits of gardening and food growing for health and wellbeing

By Garden Organic and Sustain
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Gardening and food growing for healthy weight

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Gardening and food growing help to achieve and maintain healthy weights by increasing:
• Food and vegetable consumption (Haines et al., 2007; Haines et al., 2008; Haines et al., 2010)
• Physical activity (Bentley et al., 2013; Park et al., 2008)
• Body mass index (Zia et al., 2012)

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) 67% of adults are overweight or obese, and 23% of 6 year olds are 25% of 10-14 year olds. The World Obesity in England, along with the rest of the UK, ranks as one of the most obese nations in Europe. It is the emergence of overweight and obesity that makes these statistics so worrying, as excess weight is a major risk factor for diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Although the benefits of a garden, overweight can reduce people's chances in the othering and increasing life expectancy. (Department of Health, 2011)

Excess weight gain is the result of eating more calories than the metabolic system utilises, resulting in an excess of energy stored as fat. Although this energy imbalance is often the result of an imbalance in diet, physical activity and behavioural factors, it is largely to do with energy intake as a result of eating more energy dense foods than the energy expended in a healthy body weight. The National Institute for Health and Care 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 activity part of everyday life. Engagement in gardening and food growing can address both of these recommendations and gardening is related to increased consumption of fruit and vegetables that adults are advised to undertake 30 minutes or more on five or more days of the week (NICE, 2006).

Evidence of impact of gardening and food growing on:

Food and vegetable consumption

Reviews of academic studies from the UK and abroad, concluded that food growing programmes in schools can have positive impacts on pupil diet and intake towards healthy eating, especially related to vegetables in free schools and some programmes (Haines et al., 2010; Oakes and Haines 2010). For example, a study carried out in the USA 1-12 year old children 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 (Parks et al., 2011). Lowinger and Ziskin (2005), who in the USA, reported more positive attitudes towards vegetables and reduced snacking preferences to fruit and vegetables amongst 161 year old students involved in hands on school gardening programmes. It was also of interest that participants in the USA, showed significant associations between healthy eating and FFLP, which had been associated with participation in cooking and growing in the home. Following their participation in FFLP the proportion of primary school age children eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables increased by 20% (Chow et al., 2011). Haines et al (2011) reported details of a number of studies demonstrating that health engagement in background activities resulted in increased consumption of vegetables. But a list of studies that investigated an intervention effect of new involvement in growing and highlighted the lack of longitudinal studies demonstrating whether such programmes can change eating habits in the long term.

For adults, Adams et al (2006), reported that housewife members who participated in community gardening consumed fruits and vegetables 4.4 times more 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 (Duckworth et al., 2007) found that men and women living in households that grew food consumed more fruit and vegetables than other men and women.

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the alliance for better food and farming
Food growing for health and wellbeing

sustain
the alliance for better food and farming

garden organic
the national charity for organic growing



Case studies


Food growing for health and wellbeing

Sydenham Garden
Sydenham, London Borough of Lewisham



Growing Health Case Study
Health area: Mental health and dementia

This series of Growing Health case studies provide examples of projects which use food growing in the community to provide health benefit.


Food growing for health and wellbeing

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership: Harvest
Brighton & Hove



Growing Health Case Study
Health area: Healthy eating, physical activity and mental wellbeing

This series of Growing Health case studies provide examples of projects which use food growing in the community to provide health benefit.



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