

TH Activity Plan – Celebrating Potato Blossoms

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Photo by L. Fleming



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants attend a community-wide event celebrating potato blossoms and their community.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Increase awareness of potatoes as an important economic horticultural/agricultural/cultural product

Physical: Strengthen hand dexterity & strength; support more active lifestyle

Psychological/Emotional: Strengthen sense of place & sense of belonging; reduce feelings of isolation

Sensory: Participate in activities involving the senses

Social: Strengthen community; expand social connections; increase sense of purpose; promote volunteerism & community service

Materials

Potatoes with blossoms

Materials for activities: parade, potato peeling, potato costume

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Organization of the community event & promotion of the Potato Blossom Festival, growing potatoes, enlisting help/sponsorship of local groups is undertaken prior to event.
2. Facilitator is available on the day of the event, encouraging participants to attend & engage in activities like potato peeling contest, parade, youth talent competition, farmers' market, potato costume, & other hands-on activities. See notes below.
3. Materials & delivery of activities will vary by activity.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Community-wide celebrations can strengthen social ties, particularly sense of place and belonging. For some individuals and groups this will be an important therapeutic goal in the social domain. This can include young people, immigrants, marginalized populations or others who may have been displaced from elsewhere, feeling isolated, or who lack social integration skills to feel part of a community. For others, participating in the potato blossom festival will be less therapeutic, more recreational. Such an event can function in both capacities.

Community events can build social cohesion among residents, including providing safe public spaces for events. This in turn can promote tolerance, inclusion, and highlight cultural components like agricultural history. Community events strengthen and support the local economy by increasing exposure to the plant, plant product and/or local businesses while generating money during the event. Community partnerships can be established (Svena & Shah, 2025). The literature supports health benefits of community events contributing to positive mental health, conditions that enable people and communities to thrive, increased sense of pride in community, and increased volunteerism (What Works Wellbeing, 2019).

Strengthening the social therapeutic elements of such an event can involve inviting individuals or groups to participate in the parade, potato peeling contest, talent show or other events. Or leading people/groups in

community service judging events, parade preparation, or public awareness booth. Intentional interventions will For specific therapeutic outcomes, intentional interventions will be required.

Facilitators/therapeutic horticulture practitioners can play several different roles depending on client group, setting and community needs:

Planning and/or Consulting Role – The community may request guidance in addressing an issue prevalent in the area (racial intolerance, youth delinquency, integration of new residents). And may want ideas for hands-on activities related to the plant that is being celebrated. These can be provided by TH professionals.

Delivery of TH Services for a Particular Group – The festival itself may not identify or request these TH services but social agencies may, with benefits their client group may experience by participating in the activities. For example, at risk youth assisting a hands-on activity, supervised by the facilitator.

Staffing a Hands-on Activity – Identifying and manning a booth, station or kiosk where a hands-on plant activity is available for the public is another capacity in which a TH professional can be effective. This may include the above-mentioned role.

Hands-on activities, the wheelhouse of TH professionals, can offer many benefits and can be adapted to potatoes or other plants. Potato focused activities could include: block printing where decorations are carved from potatoes, planting a potato, [peeling potatoes](#), hot potato game, cornhole game using potatoes, drawing/creating Mr. Potato Head, [plant parts and plant parts rap](#) starring the potato, and naming food dishes made from potatoes (other than French fries) ([Fring Frang Acadian Potato dish](#)). The links indicate THAD activity descriptions available online.

Many communities have plant themed festivals. These include [Plant City FL Strawberry Festival](#), Washington DC Cherry Festival, [Orange Blossom Festival in Davie FL](#), [Gilroy Garlic Festival](#) in California, and [La Tomatina Food Fight Festival](#) throwing tomatoes in Bunol Spain.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Facilitator needs to assess safety of event for participant’s mental and physical capabilities and participation, or safety threat or concern they may pose to other members of the community.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Prince Edward Island (PEI) Canada has hosted a Potato Blossom Festival since 1975. The PEI Potato Board provides information on potatoes, a main crop in the province. “Potatoes are annual plants, and like most annuals will produce flowers. While each variety is different, most potato varieties start to flower at about 45-50 days after planting. Some varieties have more flowers than others do, but most will keep flowers for about 30 days. Flowers will fall off and the plant will be ready for harvest within 30-45 days. Each variety flowers into a different beautiful colour – pink, purple, white, yellow and many varying shades in between. There is no hard and fast rule that color of the flower correlates with the color of the potatoes under the plant; however, dark pink flowers often indicate red tubers. The most popular variety on PEI, Russet Burbank has a sparser white flower. Shepody is purple and Superior has a lilac-coloured flower.”

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Fleming, L., & Carroll, K. (2023). [TH activity plan – Fring frang Acadian potato dish](#). University of Florida Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database.

PEI Potato Board. (2025). [Potato blossoms](#). PEIPotato.org.

Swena, J., & Shah, S. (2025). [Encouraging active living through community events](#). American Planning Association.org.

What Works Wellbeing. (2019). [Evidence briefing | Community events](#). What Works Wellbeing.org.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025. TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.