

Activity: Nature Goal: Cognitive/Intellectual Populations: All but children

## TH Activity Plan – In the Garden Slide Show

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**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will view a slide show “In the Garden” with an interactive component promoting intellectual stimulation and connections to nature.

### THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Participate in word games/puns individually or in a group setting; stimulate brain connections

**Physical:** Laugh out loud using lungs & diaphragm

**Psychological/Emotional:** Promote positive thoughts & mood

**Sensory:** Stimulate senses using visual cues of nature & gardens; touch live plants

**Social:** Participate in humorous ideas, discussions & jokes with others

### Materials

Slide show link

<http://tinyurl.com/58vb4xnr>

Slide projection equipment,  
Smart tv or computer

Chairs

Live plants

Gloves, wipes

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** The full slide show may be too long for some populations. Pre-screen & determine best use. Practice getting the link and viewing it before the actual presentation.
2. Set up the viewing area with a screen, Smart tv or computer. Publicize the special event viewing of “In the Garden”. Adaptations for hearing, vision, mobility deficits should be made in advance (seating, largest screen possible etc.).
3. Facilitator begins session by introducing slide show, welcoming participants. Slide show begins. Facilitator should read the quotes & host the interactive sections.
4. It is optional to stop at specific slides and ask questions, encourage discussion & interactions. Some of the slides are set up for this interactive engagement – [What are weeds? Word Game – garden puns, Identify the herb by its description, Trivia Quiz, Reminisce – Gardens You Have Known, Flower I.Q. Quiz & Gnome discussion].
5. Having live plants mentioned in the presentation can add sensory dimensions, slow down the pace for all to enjoy & think about the prompts & questions, engage with each other & actually touch & smell the plants.

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** This activity was originally designed for use by activity directors at seniors’ facilities where participants were not regularly accessing outdoor spaces, tended to be passive vs. active, and the population was mixed; some with strong intellectual skills and others with some cognitive deficits. Using the slide show for therapeutic purposes offers a range of options. The obvious one is an alternative for outdoor activities in therapeutic program settings when weather is inclement. When delivered by someone trained in

therapeutic techniques and practice, these can promote intellectual stimulation and curiosity, particularly with an injection of humor. Some people living with dementia will find some of the humor challenging.

The physical benefits of humor are based on principles and practices of laughter therapy, which the slide show's creator Kathy Laurenhue is familiar with as a Certified Humor Practitioner. Lesley Fleming's 2017 article on intersections between laughter therapy and horticultural therapy identifies physical health benefits of laughter, some of which may be appropriate therapeutic goals: increased heart rate, blood flow and vasodilation, breakdown of nitric oxide (Miller & Frye, 2009), increased oxygen intake and physical exertion of the lungs, abdomen, diaphragm and thorax (Filippelli et al., 2001), stress reduction, release of endorphins (Dean et al., 2004), and increased brain activity (Chaverneff, 2016). Psychological/emotional benefits of laughter can address mood, distraction from pain, and as a strategy for strengthening social bonds through shared laughter (Dunbar et al., 2011). The slide show offers visually appealing nature scenes and gardens and is not entirely reliant on laughter or humor, making it applicable for a variety of populations, their particular circumstances and therapeutic needs.

Using a modality like a slide show, more passive than many TH hands-on plant sessions, can be made more active. Facilitators can include walks through a garden, touching and passing plants between participants, or standing up when certain words or plant photos appear, as well as exaggerating laughter (raising hands in air, bending at waist guffawing, stamping feet, making an elbow to neighbor gesture).

Online videos with landscapes, gardens and nature themes can be additional resources though these do not typically include humor like the "In the Garden" slide show but can be relaxing and mood enhancing (Beautiful Landscapes, 2018) or uplifting (D.C. Gardens, 2014).

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:** Few safety challenges exist with this TH activity. Participants should be mindful of computer cables as potential tripping hazards. Too much laughter can result in an increased need for more.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** This activity can be used virtually for all/any TH programming. Facilitators can send the slide show (power point) link electronically to individuals or facilities. Individuals and facilities will require the ability to use the technology to receive and view the slide show/powerpoint. Most populations will enjoy the slide show. Many children 16 and younger will probably not have life experiences to relate to the quotes, trivia questions and puns.

#### REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Beautiful Landscapes 4K UltraHD Slideshow 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgZfmWXTqas>

Fleming, L. (2017). Laughter Therapy and Horticultural Therapy: Cross Pollination. *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture* 27(2), 39-50. (Refer to this paper for research citations listed above).

D.C. Gardens. (2014). U.S. Botanic Garden in April – Slide Show and Video.

<https://dcgardens.com/botanic-garden-in-april/>



Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.