

TH Activity Plan –Planting a Tea Pot Garden

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Photo by luv2garden.com

Adapted from original publication: Kennedy, Karen. (2014). *AHTA Magazine*, 42(3).



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will plant a small garden with herbs that can be used for (tea) tisanes.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn about herbs used for tisanes; expand understanding of herbal terms relating to teas & tisanes; follow multi-step directions

Physical: Strengthen hand-eye coordination planting herbs; increase standing tolerance, endurance

Psychological/Emotional: Self-initiate/choose the herbs to be planted

Sensory: Smell the herbs to be planted; taste the herbal tisane

Social: Reminisce with others about tea, tisanes, tea parties; practice prosocial behavior

Materials

Variety of herbs

Soil-less growing media

Container(s)

Watering can

Gloves, wipes

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Select healthy herbs.
2. Facilitator begins session by distinguishing tea from tisane, and outlining the session's activity of participants planting a tea pot garden.
3. Participants select a large pot and fill with a moistened soil-less growing media. [This can also be a group activity].
4. Plant a combination of tea herbs, suitable to the size of container.
5. Select a sunny location for the herbs to grow.
6. Harvest as the herbs grow, being sure to keep the flowers trimmed off for maximum flavor. Use fresh herbs in teas and to add flavor to other beverages or dry for later use.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Tips for [HT/TH] practice:

- 1) In addition to steeping in herbal teas, add herbs to iced tea, lemonade or water and fruit blends for a refreshing beverage.
- 2) Explore the various scents in a reminiscing group.
- 3) Practice vocational skills by drying then packaging tea blends. Be sure to include the ingredients and directions for use and follow any health department guidelines for preparing food.
- 4) Spoons, wide funnels, small soil scoops, laundry or measuring scoops facilitate bag filling.
- 5) Market and sell at craft fairs or package for gift giving.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Use appropriate caution with tools; take precautions for falls; activity is appropriate for containers, raised beds or in ground beds to meet the needs of participants.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: “Herb tea is more correctly known as a tisane or herbal infusion of leaves, flowers, roots or seeds. True tea comes from the *Camelia sinensis* plant. Black, Green, Oolong and White teas are all made from this plant, though additional flavoring from other herbs may also be added. Many herbs can be used alone or blended together to create a tisane or herb tea.

Many easily grown herbs do well in containers, as well as raised bed or traditional in-the-ground gardens. Mints however, are best restrained in a container. The flavor characteristics of herbs include sweet, spicy, minty, fruity, licorice, tart, citrus, and pungent. Fresh or dried lemon herbs such as lemon verbena, lemon balm and lemon grass as well as mints make a nice hot or cold tea by themselves. They also blend nicely with other herbs such as lavender, chamomile, basil, rose hips, and even rosemary. Stevia, on the other hand, is generally not used alone, but rather adds sweetness to hot or cold beverages.

Cut and dry the herbs for later use or simply add to a teapot filled with fresh boiling water. In general, use 1 teaspoon dried herbs or 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs per 1 cup of water. Steep herb teas for 7-10 minutes on average. Experiment and create your own flavor combinations!

For more details on growing herbs for use in tea blends as well as information on their history, folklore, medicinal uses and craft, culinary and cosmetic recipes, see fact sheets and essential guides on the Herb Society of America’s website.” (Kennedy, 2014).

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Herb Society of America. (2024). [The Herb Society of America.](#)

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2024.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.