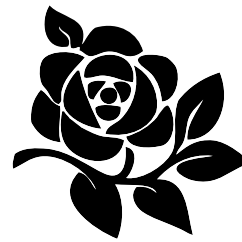


- Grow plants that make you happy. If you like lots of color, consider annuals like zinnias and sunflowers. If you like blooming shrubs, hydrangeas, azaleas, rhododendrons are winning choices.
- Include a place to sit and retreat in a private place. Installing a hammock is a rocking way to enjoy the beauty beneath the trees.
- Add a focal point for healing. This could be a sculpture, a rock or the fountain.
- Stimulate all the senses with scented plants along a walkway for smell, a wind chime under an awning to listen, leaves to taste, textural plants to feel and birds to watch.
- Attract the pollinators — birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects for their remedial energy. Hang feeders, houses, and water sources, and, of course, add nectar supplying plants including Echinacea, butterfly bush, salvias, dill and parsley.
- Eat an apple a day, hopefully one from your own tree. Apple's are a super food filled with fiber, antioxidants, and flavanoids. Research suggests prevention of or improvement from numerous conditions including diabetes, stroke, dementia, obesity, cancer and heart disease.
- Save the seeds of your best producing flowers and herbs. Drying them and storing them in a dark, cool place is the easiest way, although with tomatoes and some other "juicy" specimens, you will need to access specialized information for seed preserving.
- Prune heart risk by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol and grow bones with 30 minutes exercising and weight training in your backyard. You'll clip calories with the pruning, weeding, lifting, mowing, blowing and planting.

Finally, no matter how busy your everyday life is, do some of the garden work yourself. In our neighborhoods, people tend to hire outside help for everything, but if you really want to indulge in the free wellness program designed by Mother Nature, it's in your best interest to get out there and dig deeply.

Take a cue from Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own hands."



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