

# MINI-GARDEN

*Creativity applied to sadness (Activity 5/12)*

## DESCRIPTION

Through making, creating, and maintaining their window boxes/mini gardens, the elderly person has the opportunity to be creative through connecting with nature. This activity encourages immersion and connection with nature and has very visible results for the person involved. When they design and take care of their window boxes/mini gardens, they will see the plants and flowers grow and thrive.

## OBJECTIVES

- To promote wellbeing through connection with nature.
- To promote creativity through connecting with nature.
- To develop the skill and art of gardening (or continue to develop for those with a history of gardening)
- To benefit from the scientifically proven benefits of having one's hands in the earth and connecting with nature.
- To alleviate sadness by finding enjoyment in creating, growing, tending to, and watering one's own garden box or mini garden

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Window boxes
- Compost (small bags)
- Small watering can
- Gloves (optional)
- Variety of seeds. (Herbs, salads, plants, flowers)
- Catalogue from nearby garden center to order established plants/seedlings if desired

## IMPLEMENTATION - INSTRUCTION

Before beginning, discuss and decide... will this be a group activity or an individual activity? Both options will be highly beneficial.

Find out who would be interested, if they have a past hobby of gardening, what would they like to create? What would they like to grow? Would they like to grow edible plants? Would they like to grow visually pleasing flowers? Would they like to grow scented flowers? Would they like to grow all options?

Have an area or a big box that has all of the materials. When you have discussed in advance what people would like, begin by setting the person up at a comfortable place to begin their gardening activity. (It is a group activity, a table where every can gather in a circle or square and chat as they plant would be highly beneficial. Music in the background is optional. Ask people if they would like it. Choose a music style from a decade of their choice, not modern radio background music. Carefully selected with their enjoyment of listening being the priority. Be aware of over stimulation).

One window box per planting choice... for example... edibles in one box...flowers and scented flowers in another.

Give everyone a bag of compost, their seeds and/or seedling and their watering can. Then everyone plants their seeds/seedlings and waters them.

After germination, the elderly can enjoy watching them grow and enjoy tending to them.

## POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

There is the potential for a gardening group to be set up within the nursing home, stemming from this activity. If there was enough interest, larger boxes could be set up to grow salads or a small garden set up to grow veg, for the nursing home.

Flower seeds could be planted and when the seedlings are ready, taken care of lovingly by the elderly, they could have a stall to sell them to visitors.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

We would expect the elderly people involved in this project to find this activity useful in alleviating sadness. We would expect to see an improvement in mood.

We would expect the feeling of increased productivity to help with the emotion sadness. We would expect the benefits of immersion in nature to improve overall mood and wellbeing.



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