



Food growing for
health and wellbeing

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Sustain



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Growing Health

- Project run by Garden Organic and Sustain, funded by The Tudor Trust
- Vision - community food growing to be a natural part of the health service and routinely used to deliver health improvement
- Identify barriers & solutions
- Finding ways to make it happen



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Finding ways to make it happen

- Supporting community groups to get commissioned
- Raising awareness amongst commissioners and health professionals
- Collating and sharing evidence of the benefits of community food growing on health
- Growing Health Network



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Community growing groups

- Evidence
- Case studies
- On-line tool kit
- Share and learn events
 - Routes to commissioning
 - Building partnerships
 - Measuring outcomes
- Guide to tools for measuring outcomes
- Beacon projects eg Greater Manchester



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Health Professionals / Commissioners

- Raise awareness
- Seminars – food growing groups/commissioners
- Evidence of the benefits of food growing for health
- Poster presentations

Growing Health: Using community food growing to deliver public health outcomes

Marie Donovan (Growing Health, Sustain), Sue Coore (Public Health Trier Harford), Nigel Lennstra (Growing Health, Garden Organic), Ulrich Schmidt (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University)

Introduction It is widely recognised that gardening and food growing has a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing and there is a growing body of evidence to support this (Schmidt et al, 2016). Regular contact with plants and the natural environment can improve mental wellbeing and combined with the ability to grow food it can help improve physical health for a wide range of abilities and ages.

Summary of evidence

Major outcomes of gardening are:

- Improve psychological health, by reducing stress, the severity of stress and associated depression
- Increase physical activity, have positive contribute to maintaining a healthy weight and reduce risk of obesity
- Improve the quality of life for people with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease and help alleviate symptoms such as agitation and aggression behaviour
- Contribute to improved social functioning and community cohesion
- Provide access to healthy food, fresh produce and help increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables, as well as increasing attitudes to healthy eating
- Increase awareness to ways of life that can help improve their wellbeing in the longer term.

Food growing and the wider determinants of health

As the wider determinants of health include those that have their social, economic and environmental foundations that impact on health.

Figure 1: The wider determinants of health (Doran and Givens, 2010)

Community food growing projects can provide benefits to those:

- Individuals (elderly, young, a family) (people with regular activity and access to fresh produce which helps improve physical and mental health. Provide access to healthy, affordable, locally grown food)
- Social and community (engage the community and reduce inequalities by getting people involved in the wider sector of food)
- Activities (provide those with wellbeing and an opportunity for learning new skills)
- Built environment (physical activity is designed into the local area)

Supportive environment factors: enhance the natural environment and engage people with nature

Growing Health

Growing Health is a joint project between Garden Organic and Sustain funded by the 'Faster Trust'. It has created an active industry advisory board of healthcare professionals, academics and representatives of community growing initiatives. It is developing a comprehensive network to help community food growing can be maximally used by the health service as a way of promoting health and wellbeing.

Public health commissioning

The most convincing health interventions (which) identified examples of public health commissioning and supporting community food growing to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes. Major project case study with public health lead for the period October 2014 - March 2016. Examples of growing projects, documented to be supported by public health.

Table 1: Public health Commissioning of community food growing

Project Name	Public Health Lead	Health Outcomes	Commissioning Details
Project A	Local Authority	Improved mental health, increased physical activity	Commissioned through local authority health and wellbeing strategy
Project B	Health Trust	Reduced stress, improved social functioning	Commissioned through health trust social prescribing programme
Project C	GP Practice	Improved mental health, increased physical activity	Commissioned through GP practice health and wellbeing strategy

Opportunities

- To build on good and repeated health
- To develop further research to show the cost effectiveness of food growing programmes compared with other interventions
- To build confidence in the public health team by providing knowledge sharing and training
- To build evidence in the public health team by providing evidence on the impact of food growing on health and wellbeing outcomes, including an increase in fruit and vegetable intake, improvement of skills and being a supportive, productive of healthy food

Challenges

- Lack of funding of health commissioning, often small scale, often not food growing projects can be difficult
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Conclusion

The growing health project has shown how public health commissioning food growing to meet their outcomes, training and supporting community food growing can provide an effective way to improve health and as a general health and wellbeing outcome.

• Commissioning community food growing projects to deliver health outcomes supporting the setting up of development of projects, including building providing access to land and other resources such as staff support

Growing Health – making gardening and food growing a natural choice for your patients

Luiz Alan Jones FRCS (Growing Health Champion, Lancashire Health Foundation), Marie Donovan (Growing Health, Sustain), Nigel Lennstra (Growing Health, Garden Organic), Ulrich Schmidt (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University)

Introduction It is widely recognised that gardening and food growing can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing, being outdoors and actively engaging with the natural environment is good for both physical and mental health. Here we present the evidence for this, including examples where the many health benefits of gardening and food growing have been used by the health service to improve patient outcomes.

How do gardening and food growing benefit health and wellbeing?

Published evidence of the benefits of gardening and food growing for health and wellbeing are reviewed by Donovan et al, 2016. The outcomes are outlined in the notes, which can be downloaded from www.growinghealth.org.

Public health and wellbeing

- High involvement in community gardening contributes to improved social and mental health, and improved wellbeing
- Community gardens support an increase in vegetable and fruit consumption, increasing the intake of vitamins and minerals, and increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables, as well as increasing attitudes to healthy eating
- Increase awareness to ways of life that can help improve their wellbeing in the longer term.

Physical and mental health

- Being in a garden and being part in horticulture activities can improve quality of life for people with dementia
- Short-term intensive gardening activities can have a positive impact on mood of working, supporting positive, communication and engagement and improve anxiety symptoms such as depression and aggressive behavior

Stroke and stroke-related illness

- Being in the natural setting of the garden can reduce stress, increase relaxation and improve recovery from stroke
- Engaging in gardening during rehabilitation from stroke can facilitate healing of stroke and contribute to better long-term engagement, compliance with therapy and health care
- Patients can be encouraged to engage in gardening and food growing as a way of increasing their physical activity and improving their health and wellbeing

Health weight

- Gardening has been shown to reduce the risk of obesity and improve physical activity including patients to meet physical activity recommendations, both more actively and consistently to longer-term engagement, compliance with therapy and health care
- Patients can be encouraged to engage in gardening and food growing as a way of increasing their physical activity and improving their health and wellbeing

Supportive environment

- Gardening has been shown to reduce the risk of obesity and improve physical activity including patients to meet physical activity recommendations, both more actively and consistently to longer-term engagement, compliance with therapy and health care
- Patients can be encouraged to engage in gardening and food growing as a way of increasing their physical activity and improving their health and wellbeing

Case Study: Sustain Garden

A charity providing physical and mental health and wellbeing services to a group of patients, including a group of patients with dementia, using a garden growing project to improve their health and wellbeing.

Conclusion

The evidence and outcomes achieved by projects throughout the UK confirm the benefits of making gardening and food growing a natural choice for your patients. We can therefore recommend gardening and food growing to be used by the health service as a way of promoting health and wellbeing.

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Growing Health Network communications

- Growing Health Network
- Growing Health Working Party
- Growing Health Champions
- e-newsletter
- Website – www.growinghealth.info
- Social Media

Twitter- @growing_health

Facebook - Growing Health



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Thank you

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