



Nourish

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Can Gardening Help Maintain Your Brain?



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If you enjoy gardening or visiting gardens, you may have noticed that being around plants can boost your mood and reduce stress. The sights, scents and colors of gardens often bring back pleasant memories.

Research suggests that gardening may do more than beautify our surroundings. It may help support brain health. In a long-term study of more than 2,800 adults in New South Wales, Australia, researchers found that people who gardened reduced their risk of dementia by 36% over a 28-year period.

More recent research highlights the importance of lifestyle habits in reducing dementia risk. Gardening combines several brain-friendly activities: physical activity, stress reduction, improved sleep, social interaction and time spent outdoors. Even brief periods in the sunshine can help boost mood and support vitamin D production in our bodies.

Gardening also encourages healthy eating. Growing vegetables often leads us to enjoy a wider variety of nutrient-rich foods that support overall health, including brain health. Consider these examples:

- **Vitamin C:** Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, strawberries, peaches and cantaloupe
- **Folate:** Leafy green vegetables such as spinach and lettuce
- **Beta-carotene:** Sweet potatoes, carrots, kale, spinach and winter squash

Whether you grow a large garden or a few containers on a patio, gardening can be a rewarding way to nourish both your body and mind.

Learn more about nourishing your mind and body with NDSU Extension's Nourish Your Body materials.

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Question

I heard that the U.S. has approved a new sunscreen ingredient. Can you tell me more?

For the first time in 20 years, a new sunscreen ingredient – Bemotrizinol (BEMT) – was added as a sunscreen option in June 2026. It has been safely used in Europe for many years. It provides protection against both UVA rays, which contribute to skin aging, and UVB rays, which cause sunburn.

You may begin seeing BEMT listed on sunscreen labels. Unlike zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, which can leave a white cast on the skin, BEMT is transparent and less greasy. These qualities may encourage more people to use sunscreen regularly.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. People with pale skin or freckles and those who sunburn easily are at greater risk of skin cancer than others, but anyone could get skin cancer.

While sunscreen is an important part of skin protection, it should be used along with other sun-safe habits:

- Limit time in the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Wear a broad-brimmed hat, sunglasses and long-sleeved shirt and pants to protect your skin.
- Apply sunscreen generously and reapply at least every two hours, or more often after swimming or heavy perspiration.



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Peaches are “in season” at grocery stores in the Midwest. One medium raw peach has just 50 calories, 15 grams carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 2 g fiber. A peach also provides vitamins A and C.

Mocktails are alcohol-free, refreshing beverages, and this recipe makes use of fresh (or canned) peaches. Make a charcuterie board for a fun social gathering. See NDSU Extension's “3 Steps to Making Mocktails” with five mocktail recipes and “7 Steps to Creating a Charcuterie Board” for ideas to incorporate fruits, vegetables, cheese and meat on your tray.



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Peach-Mint Julep

2 limes, rinsed, halved and cut in wedges
1 cup fresh or canned peaches (in water), muddled
24 mint leaves
4 teaspoons granulated sugar
Ice as desired
1 ½ cups unflavored or flavored sparkling water

In a small bowl, add the lime, and muddle using a muddler or the back of the spoon. Muddle (stir) until the pulp and juice are extracted from the lime. Remove the lime wedges and add peaches, mint and granulated sugar to the bowl. Muddle again until a puree consistency. The mint leaves won't break down completely. Add 1 cup of sparkling water and the rest of the contents into a shaker (or other covered container) with ice and shake for 30 seconds. Pour contents into glasses and top with remaining sparkling water.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 41 calories, 0.1 g fat, 0.5 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 22 mg sodium.