

11 Compelling Reasons to Embrace Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Living



Rainwater harvesting is the practice of collecting and storing rainwater for later use. It can be a key component of sustainable living. If you garden, then you can't help but notice the changes to the earth. As a result, you might feel a drive to live more sustainably. Rainwater harvesting for sustainable living makes a lot of sense. You'll see that there are some really compelling reasons to give it a try at your own home.

What Is Rainwater Harvesting?

As the name explains, this is the process of harvesting rain. In other words, when it rains, you collect that water. Then

you make use of it. Rainwater harvesting [includes](#) catching the water, filtering it, storing it, and then using it. Rainwater harvesting is an effective way to conserve water resources, implement [integrated urban water management](#) strategies, and promote sustainability.

What Is Sustainable Living?

Sustainable living refers to a lifestyle that aims to minimize one's ecological footprint and promote practices that are environmentally responsible, socially just, and economically viable. It involves making conscious choices and taking actions that reduce the negative impact on the planet and contribute to the well-being of both present and future generations. Rainwater harvesting for sustainable living is just one component of a whole lifestyle. As someone interested in frugal gardening, you may also already embrace many other elements of sustainable living.

Compelling Reasons to Embrace Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Living

Here are some of the reasons that you might want to take the leap into rainwater harvesting for sustainable living.

Rainwater Is Great For Your Garden

Rainwater harvesting is commonly used for watering gardens and landscaping. Rainwater is an excellent source of water for plants because it is free of chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals typically found in tap water. Additionally, rainwater is naturally soft and slightly acidic, which is beneficial for many plants. Since you already garden, why not take advantage of the opportunity to water the garden with rain?

A short list of the benefits of rainwater harvesting for your garden includes:

- Provides a free and abundant water supply for garden irrigation.
- Reduces reliance on municipal or groundwater sources for garden watering.
- Offers a natural and chemical-free water source, beneficial for plant health.
- Helps conserve potable water for essential household needs.
- Reduces water bills and overall water consumption.
- Supports sustainable gardening practices and environmental stewardship.
- Prevents soil erosion and nutrient runoff by controlling the intensity of watering.
- Allows for more efficient water distribution directly to plant roots.
- Improves soil moisture retention, especially in dry climates.
- Reduces the risk of overwatering, which can harm plants and promote disease.
- Promotes self-sufficiency and resilience by providing an independent water supply.
- Can be used for other garden-related activities, such as washing gardening tools or containers.
- Encourages water-conscious behavior and environmental awareness.
- Enhances overall garden health, growth, and productivity.
- Can be integrated with other sustainable gardening practices, such as composting or mulching.

Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable

Living Helps Earth's Water Situation

Sustainable living is all about being good to the Earth. Water is key on our planet. Water conservation and water scarcity are two aspects that help us reduce water waste and increase water availability around the world. They're similar but also different:

Water Conservation

Water conservation refers to the efficient use and management of water resources to minimize wastage and preserve water for future generations. Rainwater harvesting contributes to water conservation by collecting and utilizing rainwater for various purposes, reducing the need for freshwater from traditional sources. By using harvested rainwater for activities like irrigation, toilet flushing, or washing clothes, you conserve potable water that would otherwise be consumed for those tasks.

Mitigating Water Scarcity

Water scarcity occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available supply, leading to insufficient access to water for human and environmental needs. Rainwater harvesting helps mitigate water scarcity by providing an additional source of water. By capturing and storing rainwater, you reduce the strain on existing water sources, such as groundwater or municipal supply, especially during periods of drought or water shortages. Harvested rainwater can serve as a valuable backup or alternative water source to supplement traditional supplies, thereby increasing water availability and reducing scarcity risks.

Other Environmental Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting for Sustainable Living

In addition to the water benefits of rainwater harvesting,

there are some other important environmental benefits that make for compelling reasons to try rainwater harvesting for sustainable living.

Reduces Strain on Stormwater Management Systems

Rainwater harvesting helps reduce the volume of stormwater runoff entering municipal stormwater management systems. By capturing rainwater from rooftops and other surfaces, you decrease the load on storm drains and sewage treatment plants. This can prevent overflow situations during heavy rainfall, which can lead to pollution of water bodies and strain on infrastructure.

Supports Local Ecosystems

By reducing stormwater runoff, rainwater harvesting helps maintain the natural water balance in local ecosystems. This is particularly important in urban areas where impervious surfaces like roads and buildings dominate the landscape. By allowing rainwater to infiltrate into the ground or using it for irrigation, you help replenish groundwater levels, support vegetation growth, and provide water for wildlife habitats.

Minimizes Erosion and Soil Degradation

Traditional stormwater runoff can cause erosion and soil degradation due to the force and volume of water rushing over surfaces. Rainwater harvesting systems, such as rain gardens or infiltration basins, capture and slow down the flow of rainwater, allowing it to infiltrate into the soil. This helps replenish groundwater and reduces erosion, promoting healthier soil conditions and preserving land integrity.

Reduces Demand on Energy-Intensive Water Treatment

Rainwater harvesting decreases the demand for water from centralized systems, which often rely on energy-intensive treatment processes. By utilizing harvested rainwater for non-potable uses like irrigation or toilet flushing, you reduce

the need for water treatment, pumping, and distribution. This indirectly lowers the energy consumption and associated carbon emissions of water treatment facilities, contributing to a greener and more sustainable infrastructure.

Mitigates Urban Heat Island Effect

The urban heat island effect occurs when urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural areas due to the concentration of buildings, pavement, and lack of vegetation. Rainwater harvesting, when combined with green infrastructure practices, such as green roofs or rain gardens, can help mitigate this effect. Vegetation and green spaces associated with rainwater harvesting systems help cool the environment through evapotranspiration, shading, and reducing heat radiation, creating a more comfortable and sustainable urban environment.

Self-Sufficiency

By collecting rainwater, you become less reliant on external water sources. Therefore, you experience a greater degree of self-sufficiency. This is particularly advantageous in rural areas. It's also important during emergencies when access to water may be limited. Having a rainwater harvesting system in place ensures a more reliable and independent water supply.

Community Sustainability Education

Implementing rainwater harvesting systems in your home can serve as an educational tool for your family and community. It raises awareness about water conservation, sustainability, and the importance of utilizing alternative water sources. You can inspire others to adopt similar practices, fostering a more environmentally conscious community. If you participate in community gardens then you know how much this type of education benefits everyone.

Collecting Rainwater Saves You Money

Finally, sustainable living also means living within your financial means. Using rainwater for various household needs can lead to significant cost savings over time. Depending on your location and water usage, rainwater harvesting can help lower your water bills by reducing the amount of water you consume from traditional sources. This is particularly beneficial in areas with high water costs or where water metering is in place.

Read More:

- [Harvesting Rainwater for the Frugal Gardener](#)
 - [4 Frugal DIY Drip Irrigation Systems](#)
 - [5 Plants That Easily Grow in Water](#)
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A Visit to Hollister House Garden



Hollister House Garden, all photos by Kathryn Vercillo, 2023

I'm never going to have an English garden. It just feels a little bit too perfect for my brown thumb, even though it has some informality to it. Either way, though, they are beautiful gardens, and it's a delight to get a chance to visit one. I

had just that chance recently on a family trip to Connecticut. We were staying in Washington, CT, where we visited the Hollister House Garden.

What Is Hollister House Garden?

As [the website](#) proudly proclaims, this garden is:

“A classic garden in the English manner, with a loosely formal structure, informally planted in generous abundance situated in the Litchfield hills of Northwestern Connecticut.”

They further go on to explain that the garden is inspired by famous English gardens. However, it's an American version of that inspiration, particularly in terms of plant choice.



What Is an English Garden?

An English garden refers to a particular style of gardening that originated in England. It became popular during the 18th and 19th centuries. Their style is characterized by its

naturalistic, romantic, and somewhat informal design despite the fact that it has a formal structure.

Formal aspects of the English garden include:

1. **Symmetry and Balance:** Formal English gardens often exhibit a sense of symmetry and balance in their design. Pathways, hedges, and flowerbeds may be laid out in precise geometric patterns, creating an orderly and structured appearance.
2. **Defined Shapes and Lines:** The formal elements of an English garden involve crisp and well-defined shapes and lines. This includes neatly trimmed hedges, geometrically shaped flowerbeds, and precisely aligned paths or walkways.
3. **Architectural Features:** Formal English gardens often incorporate architectural elements, such as statuary, fountains, and ornate gazebos. These features add a touch of elegance and structure to the overall design, enhancing the formal atmosphere.
4. **Pruned and Controlled Plantings:** Plants in formal English gardens are typically pruned and shaped meticulously to maintain a controlled and uniform appearance. This includes topiaries, espaliered trees against walls, and manicured shrubs.



Informal aspects of the English garden include:

1. **Naturalistic Layout:** Informal English gardens embrace a more natural and relaxed layout. Paths and walkways may meander and curve, mimicking the flow of nature rather than adhering to strict geometric patterns.

2. **Abundance of Plantings:** Informal gardens are known for their profusion of plants and flowers. They often feature mixed and densely planted beds of various colors, textures, and heights, creating a sense of abundance and wild beauty.
3. **Soft Edges and Blending:** Informal English gardens avoid sharp edges and instead emphasize softer transitions. Plants may spill over onto pathways, creating a more organic and less structured appearance.
4. **Embracing Nature:** Informal gardens celebrate the natural characteristics of the landscape. They may incorporate elements such as natural rock formations, existing trees, and gentle slopes, harmonizing with the surroundings rather than imposing rigid structure.
5. **Cottage Garden Influence:** Informal English gardens often draw inspiration from traditional cottage gardens, with their casual and charming aesthetics. This influence can be seen in the use of cottage-style plants, including roses, hollyhocks, and other cottage garden favorites.



More About Hollister House Garden

George Schoellkopf started the garden in 1979. The garden is located on about 25 acres of woodsy land, next to a house built in the 18th century. Hollister House Garden was designed

to complement the old house as well as the barns and buildings from the same era that surround the place. They used antique / handmade materials as much as possible to add to this feeling.

The garden combines formal elements with the natural surroundings. The paths, walls, and hedges blend into the landscape. There are about different sections with varying colors and spaces. Walls and hedges, about eight to ten feet tall, define the different areas, creating a solid structure for the various plantings. There is also a winding brook and a large pond on the property.

Plants at Hollister House Garden

Naturally, you'll see [different plants blooming at different times](#) depending on when you visit the garden. These are mostly spring and summer plants. Therefore, you should visit between April and October. During the winter months, you get a little bit of fall foliage, but you don't see a lot of the beauty of the English garden. We went at the beginning of June, which is one of the best times of year to go. I recognized lilies and forget-me-nots, as well as the red Japanese Maple trees.

My sister knows plants a lot better than I do, so she pointed out the others for me. The small hedges were Boxwood, the large ones were Yew. There were also a lot of dogwood trees. For flowers she noticed irises, peonies, azalea, zinnias. She said not everything was in bloom but we also saw viburnum, daisies, salvia, dianthus, sweet bush, and wiegela. And, of course, mountain laurel, which is the state flower. It was a lot of lovely color laid out in little "rooms" separated by hedges.



What I Loved About Hollister House Garden

Those “rooms” are what’s so great about English gardens. One of the things that I love about old San Francisco houses is that they’re made up all of these little rooms and nooks so

even in a small square footage space, you get to explore and see discover things. English gardens are like this. While this particular garden is large, you could scale it down and use hedges to create rooms in a smaller garden and achieve the same effect. It's a delight because it feels like you're on an adventure, not just sitting in a garden.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with just sitting in a garden, either. There are plenty of great places to just sit in this garden as well. Benches. Tiered rock stairs. We hiked over a small bridge to a viewpoint overlooking the house and garden, sitting on large rocks there. It was peaceful. Beautiful. Inspiring. Colorful. Green, so green. The weather was lovely, the view was amazing, and the people we ran into while visiting were all welcoming. All in all, it's what you want when you visit a garden.

Read More:

- [Garden Photo Walks for Mindfulness](#)
- [The Best Plants for Mental Health Benefits](#)
- [Greek Gardening Style on the Cheap](#)

14 Essential Gardening Products That Are Under \$10 on Amazon



Starting and maintaining a garden rarely has to be an expensive endeavor. There are really only a few essential products for gardening. Surprisingly, many of these are \$10 Gardening Products. In other words, you can get what you need for ten dollars or less in each essential category if you're smart about your purchases. These can all be found on Amazon:

14 Essential Gardening Products

Everyone has their own definition of "essential" when it comes to gardening. That said, here are what I consider the 14 most essential gardening products. Moreover, I've included options for each of them at \$10 or less.

1. Watering Can or Hose

It's essential to have a way to water the plants in your garden. If you're looking for \$10 gardening products in this category, here are a few solid options:

Watering Cans:

- Esterno Kids' Dragon Watering Can. Looking for kids' watering cans is a great way to get them for under \$10. They're also small and light since they are designed for children to carry. As a result, they are a good option for small gardens as well as for people with weight lifting restrictions.
- The HC Companies 1/2 Gallon Essential Watering Can. Similarly, small capacity adult watering cans are often affordable.
- JDEFEG Hose 12 Ft Bonsai 3L 101oz Long Plants Garden Watering Can. If you're looking for a larger capacity water can then this is a good option.

Hoses:

It's a little bit tougher to find hoses in the \$10 gardening products section. Consider:

- FHYTGBS Expandable Magic Flexible Garden Hose Pipe, with 7 Function Nozzles, 3 Times Expansion Water Hose. The 25 foot size is under \$10. The 175 foot hose is about twice that.
- XCYY brand also has a 25 foot hose for about \$10.
- Funjee brand has some 2 foot hoses that are under \$10 if you only need a short hose.

Note that if you already have a hose but want a good nozzle, you can find some in the \$10 gardening products category. For example, check out the mozeeda brand Garden Hose Sprayer Nozzle for Watering on Amazon.

2. Gardening Gloves

Protect your hands from thorns, prickly plants, and blisters while working in the garden. It's easy to find good options

for gardening gloves under \$10 on Amazon. Best picks:

- COOLJOB Gardening Gloves made of foamed latex rubber
- [MERTURN Leather Gardening Gloves for Women](#) Thorn Proof Garden Gloves with Touch Screen fingers
- Foamy Claw Gardening Gloves are really unique because they have “claws” on the ends for digging.
- Digz has some really cute designs for gardening gloves.

3. Garden Twine

This is essential for tying up plants, training vines, and providing support to climbing plants. As with gloves, it's easy to find twine in the \$10 gardening products category. In fact, most of the twine you'll find there, including natural jute as well as synthetic twine, will be under \$10.

4. Seed Starting Trays

If you're going to start plants in the garden from seed, then you'll find that these are essential. It's fairly easy to find these under \$10. Some options:

- Lawei 30 Pack Seed Starter Tray (for a total of 300 seed starter cells)
- COCONUT & CO. 144 Cells Seedling Starter Trays
- Yuanwovv 40Pcs 3.2" Peat Pots
- Hanaoyo Reusable Seed Starter Tray (for 24 seed cells per tray)

5. Fertilizer

Fertilizer is an essential component for promoting healthy plant growth. It's how you provide the necessary nutrients for

your garden. You can get many different types of fertilizer. Some good options under \$10 on Amazon include:

- Jobe's Organic 4 lb Fertilizer
- Burpee Natural Purpose 4 Lb Organic Food for Growing Strong Plants
- Scotts All Purpose Flower & Vegetable Continuous Release Plant Food, 3 lb.
- Dr. Earth 1 lb 4-6-3 MINIS Home Grown Tomato, Vegetable and Herb Fertilizer
- Cute Farms Succulent, Cacti, & Aloe Fertilizer, 4 oz.

6. Mulch

Mulch helps maintain soil moisture, regulate temperature, prevent weed growth, and protect the soil. It's tougher to find mulch than fertilizer in the \$10 category but check out:

- SuperMoss Coco Mulch
- Coco Coir Brick for Plants
- Sukh Orchid Potting Mix if you happen to need mulch for orchids

7. Soil pH Testing Kit

This helps you determine the acidity or alkalinity of your soil. With this knowledge, you can choose appropriate plants or make necessary adjustments. Try:

- Viagrow VPHTK pH Kit Drops Complete with Testing Vial, 1.4 oz
- MEASUREMAN 3-in-1 Moisture/Light/pH Soil Tester
- Gain Express Soil pH, Moisture & Light Meter 3 Way Tester Kit
- Luster Leaf Rapitest pH Soil Tester

8. Garden Fork

This is one of several garden tools among our list of essential \$10 gardening products. A garden fork, also called a cultivator, is ideal for turning and loosening soil, breaking up clumps, and incorporating organic matter. There are many different styles. Examples under \$10 include:

- Truper 6" Floral Garden Tool Fork
- JCBIZ Carbon Steel Garden Weeding Fork
- Fiskars Xact Hand Garden Cultivator

9. Hand Trowel

This is a versatile and essential tool for digging, planting, and transplanting small plants and flowers. There are lots of great affordable hand trowels. Try Fiskars Ergonomic Gardening Hand Trowel or Edwards Heavy Duty Carbon Steel Garden Hand Shovel with Ergonomic Grip.

10. Garden Hoe

This helps control weeds by breaking up the soil's surface and cultivating around plants. Consider the Elegital Kana Hoe. Amazon also has a lot of generic brand garden hoes under \$10.

BONUS: [Edward Tools Stainless Steel Hoe and Cultivator](#) is a combination hoe and fork for under \$10.

11. Pruning Shears

Use pruning shears to trim and shape plants, remove dead or damaged branches, and harvest herbs and vegetables. It's easy to find a good pair of small pruning shears on Amazon for under \$10. HyleJhJy Pruning Shears with Stainless, VIVOSUN 6.5 Inch Gardening Scissors and WORKPRO 8.5" Garden Bypass Pruning

Shears are some examples.

12. Garden Rake

Use a rake to level soil, remove debris, and prepare the garden bed for planting. Unfortunately, when looking for garden rakes in the \$10 gardening products category, you're mostly going to find hand rakes which are the same things as forks/cultivators.

You want to find a longer, larger rake. One option for a longer handle is Martha Stewart MTS-TEC Telescoping 3-Prong Garden Cultivator with Comfort Grip Handle. That said, for a real leaf-raking rake, you're going to expect to pay about \$20.

13. Sprayer

A garden sprayer allows you to apply liquid fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides evenly and efficiently. Check out Chapin International G390 Lawn Hose End Sprayer for Fertilizer in the 20-Gallon size for a solid option.

14. Seeds or Plants

After all, you can't have a garden without them. You can find many options in this category, of course.

What do you think are the most essential \$10 gardening products?

Read More:

- [5 Cheap Substitutes for Seedling Trays](#)
- [Greek Gardening Style on the Cheap](#)
- [Cheap Must-Have Tools for Frugal Gardeners](#)

5 Reasons I Enjoy Lia's Living Almanac



I have recently become a huge fan of Substack newsletters. People write mostly longform content about the thing they are most passionate about. It's a great place to find smart writing about a range of different topics. This includes gardening. In terms of gardening and nature, the newsletter I'm loving most so far is Lia's Living Almanac.

What Is Substack?

Substack is a platform where writers can create newsletters on any topic. They can offer them free or by subscription or in some combination of both. I write a newsletter there called

[Create Me Free](#), which is about the intersection of art and mental health.

Substack caters to longform content writers so you'll find a lot of newsletters about writing as well as writing itself like people who publish serialized fiction in newsletter format. However, you can find newsletters about all different kinds of topics.

The Notes section of the site functions somewhat like Twitter or other social media but without many of those platform's drawbacks. I don't love social media but I do love Substack.

Lia's Living Almanac

I am looking into finding new gardening and nature newsletters to read on Substack. For now, though, my favorite is [Lia's Living Almanac](#). It's written by gardening expert and author Lia Leendertz.

Lia Leendertz and the Annual Almanac

Leendertz is writer who writes most frequently about gardening. She writes about growing your own food and cooking with it. Therefore, if you like fruit and vegetable gardening, you might like what she shares. She's written for Gardens Illustrated, The Garden, Simple Things and more. She also has a monthly podcast called As The Season Turns.

Each year, she publishes a book called The Almanac. Built upon the old idea of rural almanacs, it is a natural guide to the seasons of the year. It includes moon phases, seasonal recipes, seasonal bee behavior, and much more. Gardens allow us to tune into nature and this is a great reminder of how to do it. 2022 marked the fifth year of her almanac.

Lia's Substack newsletter offers weekly installations of the seasonal changes that she sees. It's a real time almanac of

sorts.

5 Reasons I Enjoy Lia's Living Almanac

I only have so much bandwidth to read longform newsletters, of course. Here are five reasons that Lia's Living Almanac makes the cut:

1. It Literally Reminds Me To Stop and Smell The Roses

Each week, Lia shares what she's noticed in the garden. She notices the first new rosebud of the season and shares that with her readers. She also notices other things in nature – the wildlife coming into the garden, the phase of the moon up above.

Time can slip by us so easily and we wonder where the seasons went. Pausing to notice what has changed in just one week offers a beautiful way to return to the present moment and ground ourselves in the season that we are currently inhabiting.

It reminds us to enjoy what is right here right now. What's here is a season's best thing. And it won't last very long at all. Remembering this through nature reminds me to have gratitude for all of the other things happening right now as well.

2. It Offers a Gardening Education

I would say that this newsletter is more about nature than specifically about gardening. However, there are things throughout that help me learn more about gardening.

In Week 20, she shared about her dog's moulting fur and how birds are using it in nests. That's something dog-owning gardeners might look into further. In week 15, she shared that there's only about one week when dandelions look really good

as border flowers. From week 5, I learned a little about how to use backlighting to make garden photography look more interesting.

Mostly, I learn about what different plants look like. I don't have a strong working knowledge of different flowers and trees and bushes. So, when she shares them, I learn from her.

3. I Love a Great List

I love lists of things. I don't know what this is all about but it's true. In each newsletter, she highlights three seasonal changes that she covers in more detail. However, before that, she provides a running list of everything from the week. I love these lists. For example, just a small selection from the list in her Week 21 newsletter:

“all the rowan trees in flower; first (absolutely delicious) strawberries of the season; almost head high cow parsley and buttercup avenues; starting off some rhubarb gin; making home-made mayo because it's asparagus season; wisteria unfolding; a waning gibbous moon low in the morning sky”

4. I Find Myself Filled With So Much More Joy

From the “about” page of Lia's Substack, she says about the importance of this weekly noticing:

“I find it life affirming and joyous. It makes me feel tiny, it makes me feel grand.”

This comes through in the weekly newsletters. They brighten my week when I read them or even when I skim the photos. They give me joy. And the reminder to notice the little things in my life brings a lot more joy to my days as well.

5. The Community Around It Is Warm and Inviting

The thing that I really love about Substack is that it creates

community. We find our tribes and we truly connect there. It's happening for me in a way that hasn't happened on other social media platforms. It's not algorithm-driven but interest-driven. Honestly, it reminds me a lot of having pen pals, of zine culture. It reminds of the early days of blogging when it was all about authenticity and sharing and connecting with others. It wasn't so toxic.

Of course, some Substack newsletters seem to have a stronger community around them than others. Lia's is great. On Substack, you can create a "chat" for your subscribers. Lia does a weekly "show and tell" where everyone shares the thing that they noticed during the week that was the most seasonal for them. This means that there are lots of gardening and nature images. It's amazing!

I get the chance to see what is growing in people's gardens all around the world. It's different everywhere, of course. For example, cherry blossoms come out in February here in San Francisco. But they don't start emerging on the East Coast until several months later. I get to notice these differences. Additionally, I get to enjoy different plants throughout the year in this way. Lia's posts sometimes include updates from Australian readers where the season is completely opposite to most of the US.

Read More:

- [5 Things I Learned About Gardening in 2022](#)
 - [Book Review: A Garden to Dye For](#)
 - [10 Best Gardening Podcasts Worth Listening To](#)
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Upcycling in the Garden: Everyday Items That Can Be Functional Garden Decorations



If you take a look around your home, or even in your recycling bin, then you will probably find items that you can use in your garden. This is, obviously, good for the earth. When you upcycle everyday items into functional garden decorations, it also saves you money. After all, you don't have to buy something to enjoy the function you're creating when you use something that you already have.

Benefits of Upcycling in the Garden

Upcycling items for your garden has several benefits including:

Environmental Conservation

Upcycling reduces waste and promotes sustainable practices. By repurposing or reusing items that would otherwise end up in landfills, you contribute to the conservation of natural resources. Moreover, you reduce the need for new production. Remember: reduce, re-use, recycle.

Financial Savings

Obviously, we love frugal gardening options around here. Upcycling allows you to save money on purchasing new garden items. Instead, you can creatively transform everyday objects into functional garden decorations.

Unique and Personalized Garden Design

Upcycling gives you the opportunity to create one-of-a-kind pieces for your garden. Each upcycled item becomes a unique feature, making your garden stand out. By repurposing different materials, you can add a personal touch and express your creativity.

Flexibility and Versatility

Upcycling offers flexibility in terms of both design and functionality. The possibilities are endless. You can tailor your garden design to suit your preferences and needs.

Educational and Creative Experiences

Upcycling provides an opportunity for learning and experimentation. It encourages you to think outside of the box. This helps you to develop your problem-solving skills as you explore new ways to repurpose objects.

Encourages Gardening

Upcycled items can make gardening more accessible and enjoyable. By getting your creative brain thinking about how you can repurpose items into functional garden decorations, you get more and more excited about getting out into the garden. It keeps things interesting as the old becomes new again.

Everyday Items That Can Be Functional Garden Decorations

With enough creativity, you can repurpose just about any items into functional garden decorations. That said, here are some of the most popular everyday items to upcycle for the garden:

Old Tires

You can use old tires in the garden in many ways. They can become:

- plant beds and raised planters
- fencing, edging or used as a retaining wall
- trellis or shelving for a vertical garden
- lawn furniture and tire swings
- steps or stairs

I also recently learned that you can use them to make a small pond. Dig a hole in the ground and place a large tire inside the hole. Then line the tire with a pond liner and fill it with water. You can even create a small water feature by adding aquatic plants and small fish, just be sure to include [Pond Pumps](#) and any other necessary equipment if you plan on expanding your pond and enhancing its features. This is a great way to repurpose a large tire and attract wildlife to your garden. However, if you are looking for something a bit bigger than a tire for your pond, you'll need to ensure

that you have the space of course. You don't have to go too big and can always keep it simple, but it would be nice to add something decorative that makes your garden stand out. Plus, you can add a plethora of additional features to your pond if it's bigger, such as [pond fountains](#) or mini-waterfalls.

Mason Jars

Mason jars are great for creating hanging lanterns or tea light holders. They can also become candle holders or you can insert solar-powered LED lights into them. These enhance the ambiance of the space, of course. However, they also serve as functional garden decorations since they bring light to the space.

Other ways to use mason jars as functional garden decorations include:

Add An Herb Garden Section to Your Garden

Fill mason jars with soil and different herbs. Hang the jars using twine. You can also use to create a hanging herb drying rack. Tie bundles of herbs together with twine and hang them upside down in the jars to dry.

Terrariums

Build mini terrariums inside mason jars by layering rocks, charcoal, soil, and small plants such as succulents or air plants. The clear glass allows you to observe the tiny ecosystem. Terrariums can be displayed on tabletops or used as hanging gardens.

Seed Storage

Use mason jars to store and organize your seeds. Label each jar with the seed type and date collected or purchased. The airtight seal of the jars helps maintain seed viability and keeps them protected from moisture and pests.

Garden Tool Storage

Attach mason jar lids to the underside of a shelf or a board in your garden shed or workspace. Screw the jars onto the lids, creating practical storage for small gardening tools, seeds, or other small items.

Other everyday items that you can turn into functional garden decorations for tool storage include:

- Wooden pallets, crates or boxes
- PVC pipes
- Buckets, bins, or other vessels
- Hanging shoe organizers
- Old aprons or purses with pockets

Plastic Bottles

Plastic bottles can be upcycled in numerous ways:

Hanging Planters:

Cut the top portion off a plastic bottle. Then poke holes in the bottom for drainage. Next, hang it upside down using string or wire. Fill it with soil and plant cascading flowers or herbs. Hang multiple bottles at different heights for an eye-catching vertical garden.

Self-Watering Planters

Create self-watering planters by cutting a plastic bottle in half and inverting the top portion (with the cap removed) into the bottom half. Fill the bottom half with water and place it in a tray or container. Insert a wick, such as a cotton string or fabric, through the bottle cap and into the soil. This allows the plant to draw up water as needed.

Drip Irrigation System

Make a DIY drip irrigation system by poking small holes in the

bottom of a plastic bottle and burying it next to your plants. Fill the bottle with water. It will slowly release water into the soil.

Wine bottles, plastic bags, used ice cream containers, PVC pipes, and old watering cans can also all be recycled into drip irrigation systems.

Garden Edging

Cut plastic bottles into strips or use them whole to create edging. Bury them vertically along the edge of your garden beds to create a decorative and functional border. The different colors and shapes of the bottles can add visual interest to your garden.

You can also upcycle wine and beer bottles to create garden edging. Rope, twine, and bricks are also good choices if you have any around.

Seed Starters

Cut off the bottom section of a plastic bottle. Then use it as a mini greenhouse for seed starting. The clear plastic allows sunlight to penetrate while retaining moisture.

Other great everyday items that you can turn into seed starters include egg cartons and newspaper.

Bird Feeders

Create a bird feeder by cutting out openings on the sides of a plastic bottle. Insert wooden dowels or sticks through the bottle for birds to perch on while they feed. Hang the bottle in a tree or attach it to a fence or post.

You can also create bird feeders by recycling:

- egg cartons
- toilet paper rolls
- pinecones

- chipped tea cups
- citrus halves!

Plant Markers

Cut plastic bottles into rectangular shapes. Write the names of the herbs on the plastic with a permanent marker or paint. Then simply insert them into the soil next to each plant.

Kitchen utensils also make great plant markers. Just write the information on the handle and stick the spoon, fork, knife, or spatula into the ground!

Read More:

- [Are Old Tires Toxic to Plants?](#)
 - [45 Upcycling Ideas for the Garden](#)
 - [5 Cheap Substitute for Seedling Trays](#)
 - [50 Cool Upcycling Ideas for the Garden](#)
 - [5 Ways Healthy Gardens Help the Planet](#)
-

The Best Plants for Mental Health Benefits



My two biggest passions in life are art and mental health. Gardening is an art form. Also, gardening has many mental health benefits. I was curious to do some research into the best plants for mental health benefits. Of course, this will vary from person to person. Nevertheless, there are some plants commonly considered beneficial in this way.

Plants and Mental Health

[Keeping plants improves mental health](#) according to numerous studies and personal anecdotes. Potential benefits include:

- Reduces stress
- Reduces loneliness
- Improves mood
- Creates routine and structure
- Improves cognitive function as well as creativity
- Enhances self-esteem
- Improves sleep

Notably, of course, this will vary from person to person. I'd argue that keeping plants can help most people's mental health but that what this looks like for each person will vary. For example, if you have severe depression, then it can be really challenging to get the motivation to water every day. Going out to your garden each day can help ease the depression. And yet, if you can't keep up with it and your plants die, that can make you feel worse. As someone who lives with recurring depression, I understand that there's a fine line. So for people like me, keeping fewer plants that require less care can be a good solution.

The Best Plants for Mental Health Benefits

The plants that people prefer are also very individual, of course. Some people feel best when growing healthy vegetables that they can eat. Others thrive with lots of very colorful flowers around. You'll know – and continue to discover – what is right for you. That said, there are some plants that are [widely considered](#) the best plants for mental health benefits. Here are some common examples:

Lavender

Lavender is known for its calming and relaxing properties. It has been shown to lower heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Lavender also has a soothing scent that can help to promote better sleep. Personally, I use lavender essential oil in my diffuser every night. I also use lavender spray on my bedding. Natural lavender growing in a garden would likely be even better.

Jasmine

Jasmine has a sweet, floral scent that has been shown to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation. Like lavender, it can

also help to improve sleep quality. Moreover, it's been shown to reduce symptoms of depression. If you're looking for an all-over "feel good" plant for mental health benefits, jasmine is one good choice.

Aloe Vera

Aloe Vera is a low-maintenance plant that can help to purify the air and remove toxins. It can also help to reduce stress and promote relaxation. In fact, aloe vera has natural sedative properties that can help to reduce stress and anxiety, improve sleep, and boost mood. Therefore, this is a really great indoor plant for both physical and mental health.

Peace Lily

Just the name tells you that this plant might have mental health benefits. Similar to aloe vera, the Peace Lily is another plant that can help to purify the air and remove toxins. Moreover, the plant contains compounds that can help to promote relaxation and improve mood. It is easy to care for and can thrive in a variety of environments, making it a great choice for those looking to improve their health without taxing their energy.

Snake Plant

The Snake Plant is yet another low-maintenance plant that can help to purify the air and remove toxins. The plant releases oxygen at night, which can help to create a more restful sleep environment. Additionally, it is known for its hardiness and ability to thrive in a variety of environments, so it's a versatile option in terms of plants for mental health.

Spider Plant

Similar to the Snake Plant, the Spider Plant is a low-maintenance plant that purifies the air. While the Snake Plant

is particular good at cleaning the air at night, the Spider Plant provides overall toxin clearing. A room with both of these should have nice clean air, making it easier to breathe and rest. This is always good for our mental health!

Rosemary

There are several great herbs that you can grow to promote mental health. Rosemary is a great example. The scent of rosemary has been found to stimulate the brain, which can improve cognitive function. Many mental health conditions affect concentration and memory. Rosemary can help with that! And yet, even while it boosts mood, it's also a calming plant.

Moreover, you can, of course, consume the rosemary that you grow. This has many physical and mental health benefits. Reducing inflammation and improving immune system function are two of the biggest benefits. This helps both the body and the mind.

Basil

Basil is another herb that can help to improve memory and concentration. It also has a calming effect and can help to reduce stress and promote relaxation. Moreover, it has cardiovascular benefits. Plants that support your overall health are good for your mental health. After all, mental health is health, as they say!

Sunflowers

Personally, I find it hard to be unhappy when looking at a sunflower. Of course, in the throes of depression, it's hard to recognize that beauty. Nevertheless, I've found that the little things do help with my baseline mood. Sunflowers are mood-boosting flowers. Their bright yellow color and large size make them a joy to look at. Plus, their association with sunshine and warmth can have a positive impact on mood.

Marigolds

These are also great flowers for mental health benefits. Their vibrant colors and easy care make them a popular choice for gardeners and flower enthusiasts. The bright colors are great mood boosters. And yet since they're easy to take care of, you run less risk of low self-esteem from times when you lack the energy to provide full care.

Chamomile

This is another flower that is relatively easy to grow and care for. Chamomile is especially known for its ability to promote sleep and reduce insomnia. After all, haven't you ever been offered chamomile tea to sleep? You can make tea with the plant in your garden or just reap the mental health benefits of tending to it.

Read More:

- [6 Health Benefits of Gardening](#)
- [5 Ways Healthy Gardens Help the Planet](#)
- [Being a Beginner in the Garden](#)
- [Choosing a Bed: Sleep Number vs Tempurpedic](#)

Top 9 Common Plant Pests and How To Control Them



I have a friend who has a pest guy. She calls this guy every time that she finds a bug. Naturally, he's very helpful. However, hiring a pest control agency can be quite pricy. Therefore, it would be helpful for her to identify the most common plant pests and how to control them. In fact, it's good advice for all of us.

Top 9 Common Plant Pests and How To Control Them

Notably, the most common plant pests can vary from region to region. This depends on a variety of factors, including:

- climate
- growing conditions
- types of plants grown in a given area
- impact of agriculture, urbanization and international trade on an area

For example, in regions with warm and humid climates, pests

such as spider mites and thrips may be more common. In contrast, pests such as scale insects and mealybugs may be more prevalent in colder regions.

Regardless of the region, however, some pests are more commonly encountered than others. Aphids and whiteflies are good examples. As such, it is important for indoor and outdoor growers alike to be aware of common plant pests and how to control them.

So, with that in mind, here are the nine most common plant pests and how to control them. I've tried to include the most effective ways to control them as well as some of the most inexpensive options.

Aphids

Aphids are tiny insects that suck the sap from plant leaves. This causes the leaves to wilt and yellow. That is one of the most obvious signs that you might have aphids.

A simple and inexpensive way to control aphids is to make a DIY insecticidal soap using a mixture of water and dish soap. Alternatively, you can actually just use a strong stream of water to knock them off the plant when you see them.

Spider Mites

Spider mites are tiny arachnids that also suck the sap from plant leaves.

A simple and inexpensive way to control spider mites is to regularly mist your plants with water to increase humidity, which can deter spider mites.

You can also use the same DIY insecticidal soap recommended for aphids to control spider mites.

Whiteflies

Whiteflies are small, flying insects that are bad for many plants.

To control whiteflies, you can use that same insecticidal soap. You can also use neem oil for these or the aforementioned posts.

However, you might want to try stick traps for flying pests like whiteflies. You can make a cheap sticky trap using yellow index cards coated with petroleum jelly. Place around your plants and catch those whiteflies.

Mealybugs

Mealybugs are soft-bodied insects that produce a white, waxy substance that protects them from predators. They, in turn, come after your plants.

An inexpensive way to control mealybugs is to dip a cotton swab in rubbing alcohol and use it to wipe off the bugs. This will kill them.

Scale Insects

Scale insects are small, flat insects that attach themselves to plant leaves and stems.

Like with aphids, you can use insecticidal soap, neem oil, or a strong stream of water to knock them off of your plants. In fact, keep this tip in your back pocket as a go to for the most common plant pests and how to control them.

You might also control scale insects by using a toothbrush or cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol to remove them from your plants.

Thrips

Thrips are tiny insects that feed on plant leaves, causing them to turn silver or bronze. If you see your plant leaves turning these unusual colors, then you should suspect thrips. They also spread plant diseases. Therefore, you want to get them under control quickly.

To control thrips, you can use insecticidal soap, neem oil, or sticky traps to catch them.

Fungus Gnats

Fungus gnats are small flying insects that feed on plant roots and can cause root damage and plant wilting.

To control fungus gnats, you can use sticky traps. Alternatively, you might want to try using nematodes. These are microscopic worms that feed on fungus gnat larvae. Although they aren't useful for all of the most common pests and how to control them, they're great for this particular pest.

Another option is to let the soil dry out between watering, as fungus gnats prefer moist soil. Of course, whether or not this is good for your garden depends a lot on the plants you have. Some will obviously not like dry soil.

Caterpillars

Caterpillars are the larvae of moths and butterflies. Notoriously, they can feed on plant leaves, causing significant damage.

To control caterpillars, you can use Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a natural bacteria that kills caterpillars.

Of course, you could also just handpick them off the plant and dispose of them.

Snails and Slugs

Snails and slugs are mollusks that feed on plant leaves, leaving behind holes and chewed edges.

To control snails and slugs, you can use diatomaceous earth or copper tape to create a barrier around the plant.

Another effective and inexpensive way to control snails and slugs is to use [crushed eggshells or coffee grounds](#) around the base of the plant, as these materials create a barrier that snails and slugs won't cross. Whether or not this is effective is up for debate among gardeners. However, it's easy enough and cheap enough that it's worth a try.

Preventing vs. Controlling Common Plant Pests

That last point about creating a barrier around your plants for snail control brings up a great point. There's pest control and then there's pest prevention. That would actually be a form of prevention. Obviously, prevention is better than developing a pest problem that you have to control.

[Pest prevention](#) also includes:

- regularly cleaning and sanitizing gardening tools and pots
- inspecting new plants for signs of pests or diseases before bringing them indoors
- avoiding over-fertilization or over-watering, which can weaken plants and make them more susceptible to pests.
- choosing pest-resistant plant varieties
- planting companion plants that deter pests
- using physical barriers such as row covers or netting to keep pests away from plants

Pest prevention is often the most effective and

environmentally-friendly approach. It obviously avoids the need for chemical interventions. However, even with good prevention practices in place, some pest problems may still arise. That's when you need to consider options to control them like those we've shared here.

Read More:

- [How to Battle Garden Pests Cheaply and Naturally](#)
 - [Maintaining a Garden to Keep Your Indoors and Outdoors Clean](#)
 - [Frugal Ways to Clean and Disinfect Your Garden Tools](#)
-

13 Gardening Books on My To Be Read Shelf



I love my local library. In fact, I get pleasure not just from going to the library and reading the books I get there but also from the process of looking through their catalog regularly and adding books to my “for later shelf.” There’s something satisfying about even just learning about which books are out there that I might get to read someday. So, I thought that I’d head over to my virtual bookshelf and let you know about 13 gardening books currently waiting there for me.

13 Gardening Books on My To Be Read Shelf

There are actually more than two dozen gardening books on my SFPL “For Later” shelf. However, here are the top thirteen on my list:

1. The Climate Change Garden by Sally Morgan

Subtitled “Down to Earth Advice for Growing a Resilient Garden,” this book seems like a must-read for gardeners in our times. Soils are eroding, rainfall is unpredictable, and plants are blooming earlier or being damaged by pests.

This book provides techniques, practices, and equipment that can be used to adapt gardens to climate extremes and protect them against exotic pests and invasive weeds. It covers topics such as adapting plant selections, using season extenders, reducing a garden’s carbon footprint, and planting more of the right trees for a future climate.

The aim is to create a low-maintenance, climate-savvy garden that can withstand the effects of a changing climate.

2. To Stand and Stare by Andrew Timothy O’Brien

The subtitle of this one pretty much sums up what interests me about it: “How to Garden While Doing Next to Nothing.” Honestly, I’m a bit lazy about active things. I’m the kind of

person who goes to the yoga studio primarily for the restorative yoga class. So, this book feels right up my alley.

3. The Joy of Gardening: the Everyday Zen of Mowing the Lawn by Ellen Mary

With a background in integral psychology, I am a proponent of the [benefits of mindfulness](#). I have a busy mind and I don't always practice what I preach. However, I regularly read books that remind me to get back in touch with the slower side of life. I like books that teach me again how to "be here now." This one looks like a must read for me.

4. Growing Joy by Maria Faila

This one's subtitle is "The Plant Lover's Guide to Cultivating Happiness (and Plants)." How I love the idea of growing joy! This one was written by the host of the Bloom and Grow Radio podcast. It also seems to look at the mindfulness benefits of gardening.

5. Creating a Garden Retreat: An Artist's Guide to Planting An Outdoor Sanctuary by Virginia Johnson

Virginia Johnson shares her personal garden journey, from a small city lot to a beautiful and welcoming oasis. Her garden is wild and carefree, with hornbeams, peonies, hollyhocks, roses, and hydrangeas. Johnson explains her process with ease and clarity, bringing her ideas to life through words and illustrations. The book is organized into clear chapters about trees, flowers, seasons, and more. It sounds so inspiring!

6. The Philosophy of Gardening by Karen Caruana

This one doesn't actually have a very extensive description on

the library website. In fact, all it says is, “A collection of essays about different gardening philosophies and practices, mostly from a German point of view.” However, that’s enough to pique my interest. I am so curious to see what is inside those pages!

7. The Regenerative Garden by Stephanie Rose

This one’s subtitle helps explain what it is all about: “80 Practical Projects for Creating a Self-sustaining Garden Ecosystem.”

A healthy, organic, regenerative garden is a self-sustaining ecosystem where everything works together. The goal of permaculture is to turn your garden into a functioning ecosystem that is less reliant on external resources and can sustain itself through many seasons.

The book’s projects cover six living elements of the garden: soil, water, plants, climate, ethics, and community. They reduce workload, conserve water and other resources, and create a habitat for wildlife. Projects include intensive planting, living mulches, self-watering planters, rain gardens, and compost systems.

8. Native Plant Gardening for Birds, Bees & Butterflies. Northern California by George Oxford Miller

I live in Northern California so this one makes a lot of practical sense for me. Plus, I love butterflies. I like birds. And I know that bees are important. A friend of mine has a garden here that is a [Certified Wildlife Habitat](#). I imagine that this book has tips along the lines of what she incorporated in her amazing space.

9. Grow More Food by Colin McCrate

My sister is the biggest gardener in my life. She prefers only to grow edibles. So, this book, subtitled “Vegetable Gardener’s Guide to Getting the Biggest Harvest Possible From a Space of Any Size,” seems right up her alley.

10. No-dig Gardening: Raised Beds, Layered Gardens, and Other No-till Techniques by Bella Line

The book says that it teaches you everything you need to know in order to start and care for a kitchen garden. No-dig gardening is better for the environment, easier on your back, and can produce an abundance of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. So, it’s worth reading about, right?

11. The Elegant & Edible Garden by Linda Vater

As you might notice, I’m often enticed by the title and/or subtitle of a book. The subtitle of this one is: “Design a Dream Kitchen Garden to Fit Your Personality, Desires, and Lifestyle.” That just captures my imagination!

12. Striking Succulent Gardens: Plants and Plans for Designing Your Low-maintenance Landscape by Gabriel Frank

I love succulents. I’m originally from the Arizona desert, so naturally I find myself drawn to cacti and succulents of all kinds. Also, they’re easier to grow than many other plants. Since I’m not really great with plants, that’s best for me. I think that even if I don’t learn a lot from this, I’d love just looking at the images inside!

13. Garden for the Senses by Kendra Wilson

Subtitled “How Your Garden Can Soothe Your Mind and Awaken Your Soul,” this one intrigues me because of the mental health benefits of gardening and plants.

Do you read gardening books? Any that you recommend me to add to my virtual To Be Read shelf?

Read More:

- [A Garden to Dye For Book Review](#)
 - [7 Free Gardening eBooks You Can Download Now](#)
 - [Gardens, Books, and Legacies](#)
-

6 Inexpensive Grow Lights for Indoor Plants



6 INEXPENSIVE GROW LIGHTS

for Indoor Plants

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Growing plants indoors is great. However, when plants are grown indoors, they often do not receive enough natural sunlight to meet their needs. This is where grow lights come

in. Of course, you can choose to spend a lot of money on grow lights. However, you don't have to do that. There are some great options for inexpensive grow lights for indoors plants.

What Are Grow Lights?

Grow lights are special lights designed just for plants. They emit a range of light wavelengths, including red and blue light which are important for photosynthesis. Grow lights can be used as the only source of light for indoor plants. However, most of us have at least some natural light in our homes, especially during the warmer months of the year. Therefore, most of us are seeking inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants that supplement that existing natural light.

Types of Grow Lights

Before we get into the most inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants, let's look at the different types of grow lights along with their relative costs. The first three on this list are the most common options and the latter three are alternatives that some people prefer.

Fluorescent Grow Lights

Fluorescent lights are a popular choice for indoor growers due to their affordability and energy efficiency. They come in two main types: T5 and T8. T5s are more efficient and produce more light per watt than T8s. Fluorescent lights emit mostly blue light, which is good for vegetative growth. However, they don't emit as much red light, which is needed for flowering. Fluorescent lights are generally the most inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants. They typically cost anywhere from \$20 to \$200.

LED Grow Lights

LED grow lights are becoming increasingly popular among indoor growers due to their energy efficiency and versatility. They emit both blue and red light, which is important for both vegetative growth and flowering. LED lights also produce less heat than other types of grow lights, which can be beneficial for certain plants. The cost of LED grow lights varies widely, but they tend to be more expensive than fluorescent lights, ranging from \$50 to \$1000 or more. Still, there are some good inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants in this category. In fact, they are a [preferred choice over fluorescents](#) for most people.

High-Intensity Discharge (HID) Grow Lights

HID lights are the most powerful grow lights available and are commonly used by commercial growers. They come in two types – one better for flowering and one better for vegetation. HID lights can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$1000 or more. Moreover, they tend to cost a lot to operate, so your utility bill will go up when using them. These aren't your best choice.

Ceramic Metal Halide (CMH) Grow Lights

CMH grow lights are a relatively new type of HID light that uses ceramic arc tubes instead of quartz. CMH lights are also cooler and more durable than other types of HID lights. However, they can be more expensive than other types of grow lights.

Plasma Grow Lights

Plasma grow lights are another type of HID light that uses plasma technology to produce a full spectrum of light. They are highly efficient, producing more light per watt than other types of grow lights, and have a long lifespan. However,

plasma grow lights are among your most expensive option.

Induction Grow Lights

Induction grow lights use a high-frequency magnetic field to generate light. Therefore, they are highly efficient and long-lasting. They emit a full spectrum of light and are a good option for indoor growers looking for a low-maintenance and energy-efficient grow light. However, induction grow lights are also among the most expensive options.

6 Inexpensive Grow Lights for Indoor Plants

With all of that in mind, the most inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants will be fluorescents and some LED options. That said, arguably the [LED lights are the better choice for most gardeners](#). Here are some good choices:

1. LORDEM Plant Grow Light

This is a 72 LED Full Spectrum Grow Light. Therefore, it's good for most plant types. It's highly adjustable in terms of plant height and has a long cord to make it easy to set up indoors. Amazon sells this for about \$20.

2. Yadoker Plant Grow Light

This one is almost identical to the previous suggestion including the price point.

3. GooingTop LED Grow Light

This one is designed with a clip so that you can clip it onto a table and adjust the light accordingly over tabletop indoor plants. According to Amazon, it is "equipped with 10 Red + 74 White LEDs, this growing Lamp is similar to the full-spectrum

sunlight at noon.” Moreover, it comes with a one year warranty. It sells for about \$35.

4. Aokrean Grow Lights for Indoor Plants

This is a cute little stand on which you set your flower pot. The light can be adjusted up to 26” to accommodate different pot sizes. It’s a stylish option that looks kind of similar to the Ring Light for humans. They are sold individually but you get a much better deal if you get a two pack. Pay about \$25 for two.

5. Mosthink LED Plant Grow Light Strips

Most of the inexpensive grow lights for indoor plants are little lamps like the ones above. However, you can also get glow light strips. These can be a great way to give the proper light to multiple plants in one area of the home. This one is 13” long and you get a two pack for under \$20. However, you can also find ones that are longer if you need to cover more area for your plants.

6. DOMMIA Grow Lights for Indoor Plants

In terms of aesthetics, I really like this option. It’s a panel that looks a bit like a sunburst or stars. You can place the panel like a shelf on a multiple-shelf plant stand, illuminating the plants below it on that particular shelf. An entire set of these looks really striking. And, of course, it gives your plants the light that they need to thrive. This costs about \$20 per panel.

Read More:

- [Edible Plants You Can Grow Inside](#)
- [Cheap and Effective Liquid Nutrients For Your Indoor Plants](#)
- [5 Quick Tips to Rescue Your Plants from Root Rot](#)

Gardening for Mental Health



I have mentioned the mental health benefits of gardening here in the past. After all, I have a Masters degree in psychology. Moreover, I have extensive lived experience with depression. So, it's a topic that always comes up for me. There are so many ways that gardening can improve mental health. But it can also occasionally exacerbate symptoms for some people. So, I thought I would do a deeper dive into this topic that fascinates me so much.

Mental Health Benefits of Gardening

[Keeping plants has been shown to improve mental health](#) whether you have a fully landscaped garden or simply a single plant in your living space. Some of the known mental health benefits of

gardening include:

Reducing stress

Gardening can help to reduce stress levels. It can be a calming activity. Plus, you also have a garden to relax in and enjoy.

Boosting mood

Gardening has been shown to improve mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. The connection to nature is usually cited as the key part here.

Promoting mindfulness

A garden helps you to focus on the present moment and your senses. You can notice the smell of the soil, the sound of birds, and the feel of the sun. I've shared my own [garden walks for mindfulness](#) with you.

Boosting self-esteem

You can derive a sense of accomplishment and pride in the work you've done to cultivate your garden.

Moving your body

Gardening can provide a moderate form of physical activity. This, in turn, improves mental health.

Purpose

You might feel more motivated to get up in the morning if you know that you need to water your plants.

Improving cognitive function

Gardening has been shown to improve cognitive function,

including memory, attention, and problem-solving skills.

Promoting social connection

Gardening can provide opportunities for social connection. You can enhance this by joining a gardening club or community garden. Loneliness can be such a trigger for mental health challenges.

Providing a sense of control

Gardening can provide a sense of control over your environment, which can help to reduce feelings of anxiety and promote mental well-being.

Offering a break from technology

Gardening can provide a break from technology. Obviously, tech can be a source of stress and anxiety for many people. Therefore, less time on those devices is better for the mind.

Fostering a sense of awe and wonder

Gardening can provide a sense of awe and wonder. It allows you to witness the beauty and complexity of nature up close. This goes a long way towards promoting mental well-being and a sense of connectedness to the world around you.

Potential Mental Health Drawbacks of Gardening

For those of us with mental health challenges, we can sometimes uncover triggers or drawbacks in even the most helpful of things. This includes gardening.

For example, I have a notorious brown thumb and have difficulty keeping plants alive. Therefore, a story I tell myself is I'm not good at gardening. When the plants reflect

this, it can provoke shame, disappointment, overwhelm and other symptoms associated with my depression. Here are some other examples:

Anxiety and OCD Triggers

Garden perfectionism can show up a lot for people. Am I doing this right? Why aren't my plants growing the way that they should? Perfectionism can show up as stress and negative self-talk in people with many types of mental health challenges. For people living with anxiety, it can worsen the anxiety. For people with OCD, it might become a source for the constant checking and rechecking of the plants.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

For people with SAD, gardening may be difficult during the winter months when daylight hours are shorter and the weather is colder and darker. This is part of a natural cycle built into our biology. However, those with SAD may feel it more than others. Luckily, there are many ways to manage the symptoms. Light therapy is often suggested, as are vitamin D tablets, in an effort to replicate the benefits of sunlight. CBD can also be bought from a [hemp dispensary](#), which can help to improve mood and sleep.

Post-Traumatic Stress (PTSD)

Although uncommon, some people with PTSD might have garden-related triggers. For example, the sound of a lawn mower or the smell of fertilizer could trigger symptoms.

ADHD

Gardening has been found to be primarily [beneficial for people, especially children, with ADHD](#). However, it can be an intensive process that requires focus and that can be frustrating for someone with ADHD symptoms.

Physical Limitations

For people with physical limitations, such as chronic pain or mobility issues, gardening can be challenging. This may exacerbate feelings of frustration or inadequacy, relating back to mental health.

Mitigating the Drawbacks

None of this is to say that people with mental health challenges shouldn't or can't garden. It's overwhelmingly a positive experience for a diverse range of different people. It offers many benefits. However, if you experience specific triggers that stress you or exacerbate mental health symptoms, then it's worth considering ways that you can mitigate the drawbacks in order to reap the benefits.

For me, it's all about having a super limited garden in my own little world. I can't have an elaborate garden that requires a lot of care. Depression makes it too challenging to keep up with that, then it just makes me feel bad. For me, it's about having a single plant or two at a time. And one of the ways that I reap the benefits of plants and gardens is to visit all of the amazing public gardens and parks in this city. So, paring down your expectations of your garden is one of my biggest suggestions for reaping the mental health benefits.

Take breaks, set realistic goals, practice gentleness with yourself around gardening. And practice mindfulness. Being present in the here and now, breathing with the plants in your garden, really magnifies the benefits for most people.

10 Quotes About the Benefits of Gardening

I find quotes inspirational. I use them as affirmations or for uplifting my mood. So, I wanted to share these ten relevant

quotes about the benefits of gardens.

1. "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." – John Muir
2. "The garden is a mirror of the heart." – Alice Sebold
3. "Gardening is the purest of human pleasures." – Francis Bacon
4. "Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas." – Elizabeth Murray
5. "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." – Lao Tzu
6. "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." – Audrey Hepburn
7. "Gardening is a way of showing that you believe in tomorrow." – Unknown
8. "Gardening is the ultimate therapy. It allows you to connect with nature and helps to heal the mind, body, and soul." – Unknown
9. "The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul." – Alfred Austin
10. "The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses." – Hanna Rio

Read More:

- [6 Health Benefits of Gardening: How It Boosts Physical and Mental Health](#)
- [5 Ways Healthy Gardens Help The Planet](#)
- [5 Things I Learned About Gardening in 2022](#)