

Introduction to Therapeutic Gardens and Therapeutic Horticulture Programmes



Therapeutic Horticulture in NParks

As part of our City in Nature vision, NParks is collaborating with community and healthcare organisations to curate purposeful gardens and programmes that promote health and mental well-being.

Through these efforts and complimentary research, we hope to integrate nature into the lifestyles of users to improve their quality of life, and to strengthen social resilience in Singapore.



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For more information on therapeutic gardens in Singapore, scan the QR code or visit our website at www.nparks.gov.sg/gardens-parks-and-nature/therapeutic-gardens



or email us at
NParks_Mailbox@nparks.gov.sg

To learn more about our City in Nature, scan the QR code or visit www.nparks.gov.sg/about-us/city-in-nature



This brochure shares simple design principles for creating a therapeutic garden, and basic information for developing a therapeutic horticulture programme. It is intended as an introductory resource for individuals, communities and organisations to get involved. Additional resources and training can be provided on request by NParks.

We hope that this brochure inspires you to explore the restorative benefits offered by therapeutic gardens and therapeutic horticulture programmes.



What is a Therapeutic Garden?

A therapeutic garden is an outdoor garden that is specifically designed based on scientific evidence to support the physical, psychological and social needs of its users.

Scientific Principles

- Biophilia Hypothesis
- Attention Restoration Theory
- Stress Reduction Theory

To learn about these principles, scan the QR code



What is Therapeutic Horticulture?

Therapeutic horticulture involves the use of prescribed nature-related activities to aid recovery from mental or physical conditions and to foster general health and well-being.

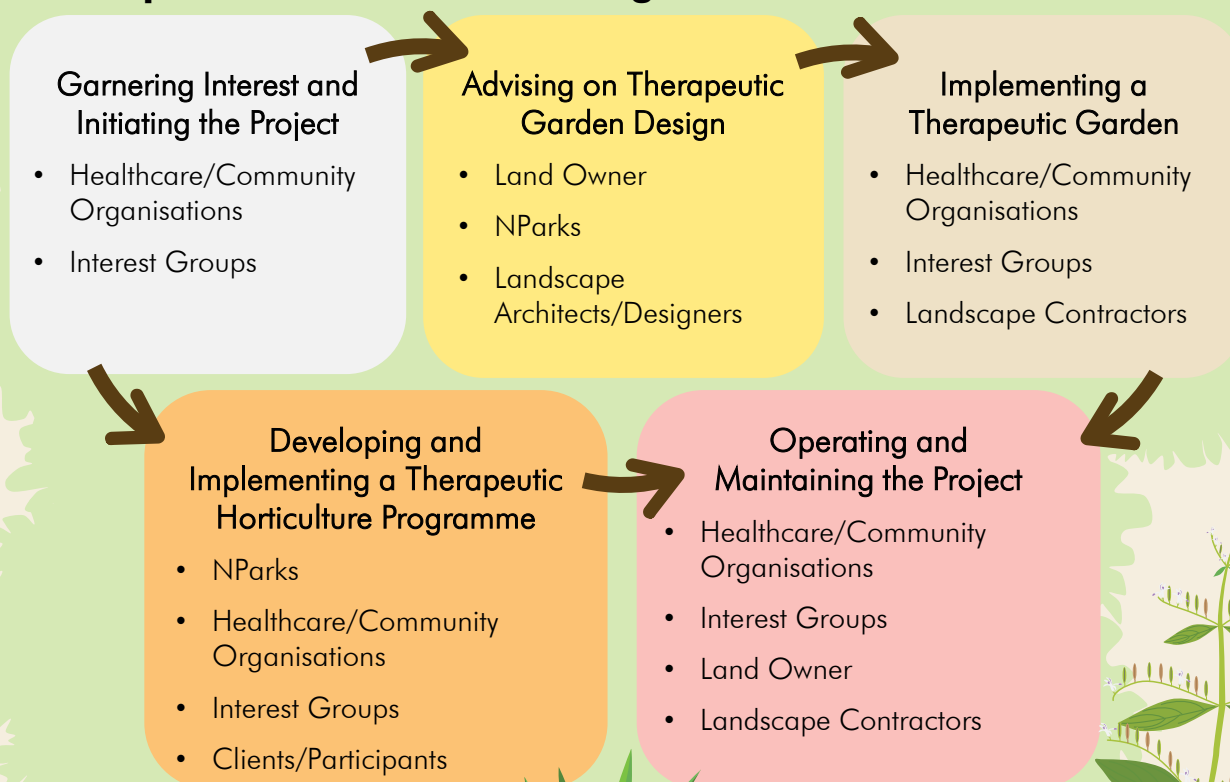
Benefits of therapeutic horticulture include:

- Psychological well-being
- Life satisfaction
- Alleviating chronic pain
- Relieving stress
- Improving attention
- Improving memory

How to Create a Therapeutic Garden?

A therapeutic garden is designed to focus on the needs of the users whom the garden is intended for. The involvement of the stakeholders in the planning and design process is vital to ensure that their needs and concerns are considered.

Stakeholders Typically Involved in Creating a Therapeutic Garden and/or Programme and Their Roles



Considerations for Creating a Therapeutic Garden



- Location**

- At least one-half of the selected site should receive full sun for growing sensory plants
 - Incorporate sheltered areas for resting spaces and conducting activities
 - Ensure site chosen is near a public restroom
- Amenities**

- Ensure restrooms are easily accessible
 - Ensure water points are available
 - Incorporate user-centric garden structures
 - Provide directional signs for wayfinding
 - Interpretive signs should also be provided to offer information about key features and plants in the garden
 - Labels with the names of plants should be integrated within the garden
 - Storage space should be provided for users to keep tools and equipment
- Zones**

- The garden should be separated into active and passive zones:
 - Active zone for activities and social interaction
 - Passive zone for rest and respite
 - Gathering spaces of various sizes should be provided for interactions with different levels of privacy
- Plants and Other Features**

- Incorporate plants that stimulate the senses through sight, scent, texture and sound
 - Include plants that evoke memories for cultural recollection
 - Avoid plants that are poisonous and/or have thorns
 - Plants should be kept within reach of users for interaction by ensuring raised planters are not too high
 - Wind chimes and water features should be incorporated to provide natural sounds for positive distractions

Considerations for Developing a Therapeutic Horticulture Programme



- Location**

- Programme should be held at a shaded and accessible location for ease and comfort
 - Selected location should be away from disruptions such as loud noises, glaring light and heat to promote calmness and peacefulness
- Materials**

- A variety of tools should be provided to facilitate different levels of ability for users to participate independently
 - Tools should be comfortable and safe for participants
 - Tools can be adapted from other instruments such as metal spoons/forks
- Frequency/Duration**

- Allow 1–1.5 hours per session
 - Allow for rest and toilet breaks
 - Programme should consist of several sessions done continuously over a long term
 - Sessions should be linked to each other for continuity and familiarity
- Therapeutic Goals**

- Activities should be selected based on the needs of the participants
 - Activities should be conducted by a trained person or therapist with knowledge of therapeutic horticulture
 - Ratio between facilitator and participants should be kept to 1:8 to allow optimal attention and guidance
- Post Activity**

- End products from each session should be taken home by participants or displayed to boost their mental well-being
 - Participants should be encouraged to share their experience after the session to promote social bonding and communication skills; this will also enable assessment of the programme

Visit Our Therapeutic Gardens



Bedok Reservoir Park
Bedok Reservoir Park, Carpark B

Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park (Pond Gardens)
Along Ang Mo Kio Ave 1, after junction of Marymount Road opposite Block 223

Choa Chu Kang Park
Along Choa Chu Kang Drive

HortPark
33 Hyderabad Road, Singapore 119578
Off Alexandra Road

Jurong Lake Gardens
50 Yuan Ching Road Singapore 618661

Pasir Ris Park
Pasir Ris Park, Carpark E

Punggol Waterway Park
Along Sentul Crescent Road (next to Carpark A)

Telok Blangah Hill Park
Telok Blangah Green off Henderson Road (next to Carpark 1)

Tiong Bahru Park
Tiong Bahru Road, Singapore 168731
Along Lower Delta Road, opposite Jalan Bukit Ho Swee