

# Horticulture Therapy: How plants can heal

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Anyone who gardens as a hobby is familiar with the calming effects on the mind, body and soul. What many may not know are the profound therapeutic benefits to those with emotional and psychological issues.

## Why Gardening?

The setting of a garden allows kids to take on the role of a caregiver, which is a positive enhancement of self-image and worth. The relaxed atmosphere of a garden is an important therapeutic environment in which people with deep emotional issues may experience relaxed conversation, socialization and expression of their feelings. According to the [American Horticultural Therapy Association](#): Horticultural therapy can enhance self-esteem, alleviate depression, improve motor skills, provide opportunities in problem solving, and encourage work adjustment, social interaction and communication.

Aggressive or angry emotions in children may be channeled into weeding, planting and hoeing in the garden. Also, horticultural therapy has been seen to help children with autism that tends to be overly sensitive or fearful of the sense of [touch](#), also known as [tactile defensiveness](#).

## Autism and Gardening



Children with autism have proven to bloom in programs that include gardening and horticulture therapy. Autistic children should never be forced into doing any activity, especially when it comes to any sensory issues they may have with [touch](#), [sight](#), [smell](#) etc. For this reason among many others, this type of environment has shown to make autistic children calmer and relieve anxiety because they come into the garden and explore on their own terms. Curiosity and engagement in activities will encourage individuals to take down their own barriers.

We encourage you to participate in this therapy with your children and WeeZee would love to see your horticultural experience! Join us on Instagram at [#weezeeworld](#) or post your photos to our [Facebook page](#)!

Check out [The Horticultural Society of New York](#) for upcoming events and programs.

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## References

Pounders, S. (n.d.). Autism and Gardening. Retrieved March 16, 2015, from <http://www.kidsgardening.org/node/92443>

What is Horticultural Therapy? (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2015, from <http://kidsgrowgreen.com/what-is-horticultural-therapy.htm>