



# Generations Gardening Together: Sourcebook for Intergenerational Therapeutic Horticulture

*Jean M. Larson, Mary Meyer*

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Bring a Sensory Garden to life in a structured therapeutic horticulture program!

Intergenerational gardening programs bring the generations together. This book presents a tested, hands-on, easy-to-use activity plan that benefits the development of relationships between adults over 70 and school-age children. It shows how to limit frustration for both groups, how to plan activities that are functional and non-contrived, and how to assure that the interaction between elders and children is rewarding and pleasant for both. The activities rely on inexpensive, readily available tools and resources available throughout the growing season.

While other books have discussed designing a Sensory Garden for people with disabilities, *Generations Gardening Together* applies the Sensory Garden design to a specific population, with a focus on the human senses that are stimulated by the garden. This unique sourcebook shows you, step-by-step, how a Sensory Garden can come alive in a structured therapeutic horticulture program.

*Generations Gardening Together* shows how to create a Sensory Garden that will stimulate young and old gardeners alike. It outlines a six-week program curriculum that has been used and developed over ten years to use gardening as a program to bring generations together. You'll learn therapeutic techniques that benefit elders by promoting self-esteem, creating feelings of pride, competence, and satisfaction—both from creating a garden and through passing on their knowledge and wisdom to the younger generation, inspiring them to use both their long-term and short-term memory skills, increasing physical stimulation, and providing the comfort of familiar plants and their aromas, which can trigger memories of people, places, and vocations.

The activities in the book also benefit children through the establishment of a safe environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can come together—an ideal social situation in which youth can seek the wisdom of elders. Children learn important lessons about accountability, nurturing, and responsibility, for working in a garden teaches youth about life, death, hope, patience, and beauty.

Each activity session described in *Generations Gardening Together* includes the following information:

- title—describes the content of the program
- general statement of purpose—identifies the intent of the program
- goal(s)—outlines the expected outcome(s) of the activity
- program procedures—provides a detailed description of each step and the order of the program's activities
- evaluation—includes what and how therapeutic program goals are to be measured and recorded
- materials and equipment—identifies all the necessary equipment and supplies needed to facilitate the program activity

This important resource shows how to provide appropriate (separate) orientation to seniors and children, what to emphasize and what to avoid in creating a program in your community, how to create garden themes that reflect the interests of the participants (ethnic foods, bird and butterfly gardens, planting to attract

wildlife, etc.), how to decide what activities are appropriate for the developmental level of the participants, and much more. Generations Gardening Together is an essential resource for therapeutic recreation specialists, occupational therapists, therapeutic horticulture professionals, activity coordinators, master gardeners, and anyone working in an environment where elders and children come together.

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