

The project Therapeutic Gardens aimed to support the development of therapeutic gardens in the countries of the participating organisations by a new exhibition, garden improvements, three study trips and several workshops.

Funded
by the European Union



Leading Organisation: Chaloupky o.p.s. a lesní mateřská škola
Location: Region Vysočina, The Czech Republic
Activities: environmental education, garden therapy eco-centers, forest kindergarden, social service, youth activities, public events
Contact: www.chaloupky.cz



Organisation: Hungarian Foundation for School Gardens
Location: Hungary
Activities: education for sustainability, supporting and networking school gardens, running school garden development projects, public events
Contact: www.iskolakertekert.hu



Organisation: SOSNA
Location: Slovakia, Košice district
Activities: environmental education and training in Eco-centre and certified Natural garden, support of school nature and climate gardens, publications, public events and festivals
Contact: www.sosna.sk



Organisation: Educational house
Location: Subotica, Serbia
Activities: environmental and mental health education, youth and family activities, community development, volunteer management, public events
Contact: <https://www.facebook.com/EdukativnaKuca>

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Garden therapy

Garden therapy naturally uses the healing power of nature on humans. In fact, natural milieu has vitamin-like characteristics as the lack of it may lead to disease, e.g. nature deficit disorder is connected to attention problems, depression, burnout, etc.



← Gardens offer a wealth of inspiration, attracts people to physical activities and games, allows people to release negative feelings, relieves stress, brings relaxation and harmony. We can train our memory, fine motor skills and our senses. We find here a space for meeting, creative work and (self-) discovery. The garden thus has an extraordinary potential for therapeutic use.

→ The distinction of garden therapy from simply being in the garden or gardening is determined by the focus. All activities take place purposefully according to a set plan under the guidance of a garden therapist all of which makes the individual feel completely safe and secure.



↑ Garden therapy helps a person feel better - both mentally and physically. Not only do people feel the therapeutic effects when they are overworked or stressed, this therapy is also beneficial in the treatment of various long-term illnesses or recovery from injuries.



↑ Garden therapy is for everyone with no restrictions on age, gender, experience or medical diagnosis. Sosna (Slovakia)



↑ Garden therapy can also take place indoors by bringing garden elements directly to the clients. This allows us to help people who are bedridden and cannot get into the garden. Floramobil, Lipka (Czechia)



Therapeutic gardens

Each therapeutic garden is unique and original. A garden designed for movement and sensori-motor rehabilitation will look different from a garden designed to train and develop self-sufficiency, fine motor skills and memory. A relaxation garden, aimed at restoring inner strength and balance, or gardens designed for children or for visual impaired persons have distinct specificities.



↑ A therapeutic garden has been created at the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo in Prague (Czechia) to assist in the **treatment of patients**.

It offers a space for silence, meditation and relaxation for patients and their loved ones.



↑ Traditional country flowers with a fruit tree planting anchor the cycle of the year and provide a time orientation for **people with dementia**. Proseč u Pošné (Czechia)



Working with plants and therapeutic techniques brings them back to normal life.

↓ **People with mental health problems** come to the ATZ Schwaigau (Austria) to garden. An increasing percentage of persons with depression, anxiety or burnout is due to the current hectic life with an emphasis on performance.



↑ The large garden of the Home Na Zámku in Nezamyslice (Czechia) for **people with intellectual disabilities** allows for gardening, growing field and garden crops and relaxation.



Garden

as a place for rest and relaxation

Fresh air, surrounding greenery, colours of flowers, play of light and shadows and the effortless attention typical in nature, contribute to the restoration of inner strength and balance.



← Rest stops are placed where there is a view of the landscape, interesting places in the garden, places where something is happening, where it is pleasant. We also create corners where a person can be alone to just listen and perceive.

↓ In the homes for the elderly we encounter small sacral buildings for spiritual contemplation. NÖ Pflege - und Betreuungszentrum Retz (Austria)



↑ Ponds create a sense of calm and make the microclimate more pleasant in the hot summer. Hof Sondern Wuppertal (Germany)



← We offer appropriate relaxation facilities for each user group, from hammocks, bags and deck-chairs to armchairs for the elderly.



Garden as a place for meeting

The garden is a space for meeting and chatting. Random encounters occur with other users. People meet others that they would not normally meet inside the building because inside, they move around in different places, or they just stay their room. The garden is a meeting place for friends and families.



← For a pleasant and peaceful time spent outdoors, it is also necessary to have a suitable environment with gazebos, shelters, shading elements and furniture. Remember to make water, electricity and toilets available as well.



↑ Garden therapy activities take place in the garden, weather permitting. Music in the garden is a pleasant diversion. Be it listening to music, singing or spontaneous dancing. We can meet at a joint roast.



← The outdoor environment is popularly used for games and sports competitions.



Garden as a place for gardening

Active gardening is not the main goal of garden therapy. Gardening has its uses in physical rehabilitation. The interaction between man and plant is also used. Gardening activities allow contact of the plant's needs and at the same time perception of your own needs. We can learn responsibility and patience and being able to take. By being able to take care of a plant, a flower bed, a garden, we gain courage and self-confidence. Self-sufficiency and work habits are developed by choosing appropriate activities.



↓ Planted containers are also enough for contact with plants. Even in a limited space, we can observe their growth and take care of them.



↓ The garden is a source of activities throughout the year. Spring for sowing and planting, summer for herb collection, autumn for harvesting and winter for processing of the gifts from the garden...

↑ Garden therapy participants are varied and all have their own individual needs and limitations. In order to give them the opportunity to participate in gardening activities, we choose the reasonable sized tools for them. It can be a raised bed, ergonomic tools or a reasonable sized tools.



← We train fine and gross motor skills in a soft way. Involvement in the activity makes forget about your health limitations.



Garden

place for sensory activation

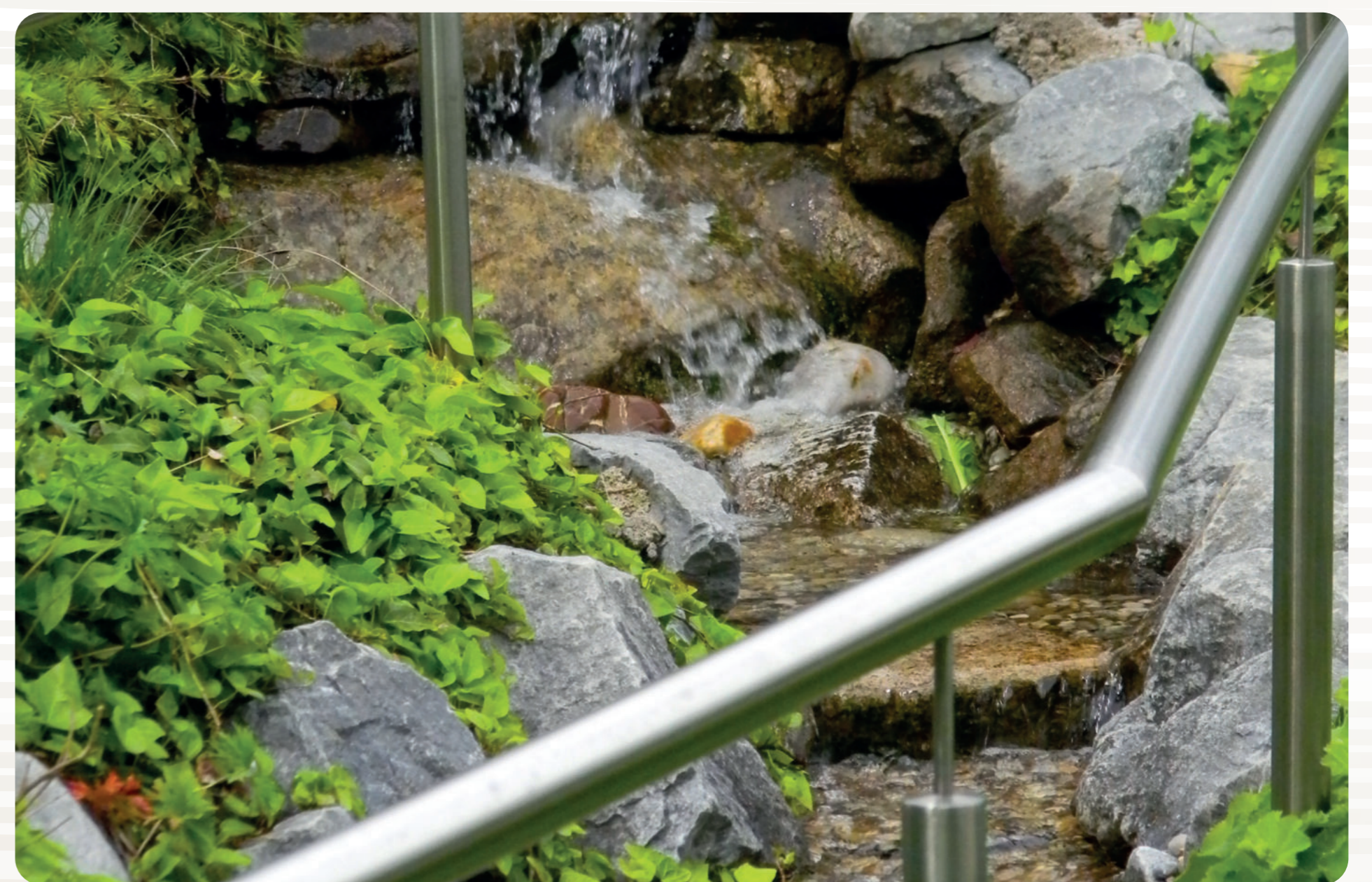
The garden and nature offer a wide range of sensory stimuli. Sensory perceptions are indispensable for the functioning of our brain. Elements are placed so to support sensory perception in the garden in such quantity that the garden is not oversaturated, but corresponds to the age, possibilities and experience of the users of the garden.



↑ We feel everything we touch with our hands, feet, face or other body parts. We use plants with interesting texture and structure. Using together our sensory organs is a good job for the brain, and has an overall developmental effect.



↑ The yellow and blue colors of the flowers are a suitable combination in gardens visited by people with visual impairments or decreasing visual abilities, for example in homes for the elderly.



↑ In the gardens, we can listen to the noises and sounds of nature, use auditory elements, flowing water will also serve as orientation. At the same time, targeted planting can eliminate street and city noise.



↑ A sensory pathway with a surface of various textures and materials. If we cover our eyes and walk barefoot, we perceive the path more intensely. Tactile containers also use a moment of tension, sometimes even overcoming oneself.

↓ Fragrant and aromatic substances have an effect on our psyche, they can stimulate and relax, they influence human bodily functions. Scents evoke memories.



Garden

as a place for movements

Movement is natural for humans. During lives, however, an injury may occur, our health, or mobility may be limited from birth. The garden can also be used to support movement. It is tempting to go for walks and to observe what has grown, blossomed and matured. Gardening activities provide immediate meaningful movement. We can also exercise in the open air.

↓ Exercise stairs for training the motor skills of seniors at the PBZ Retz care centre (Austria).



↑ The garden naturally provides elements to improve balance. In the therapeutic garden, we can also provide children with features that practise balancing. Sosna (Slovakia)



↑ Classic board games can be taken outside, whether it's Man don't Be Angry or Chess. The University Hospital Brno (Czechia)

↓ Movement and being outdoor is very important for a child's development and fostering the abilities needed later in life. The brain's hemisphere to work together.



↑ For people with reduced mobility, the paths in the garden are provided with railings and places to rest. Activities can surprise us. We learn about new possibilities and we may become more willing to try something new.



Garden as a place for creativity

Nature has an infinite source of materials for creativity. It stimulates our minds.



↑ We don't need to buy new containers for planting, just look around...



↑ Land art is sometimes created spontaneously and does not last long. Others are more durable and will decorate our garden for a longer time.



↑ Creative approach is also used when processing the harvest from the garden.



→ Using natural soil or plant painting, or just water for arts is therapeutic in itself. The outgrowths of the garden can also be used artistically. Have you ever bought a smiling pumpkin?



↑ Connecting garden therapy with art therapy - happening in the garden of the psychiatric clinic of the Brno University Hospital [CZ]



Garden

as a place
for children

Children love nooks and crannies, places where they can explore, create and gain experience. The more possibilities and stimuli the garden offers, the better. There is a place where they can develop naturally, practice motor skills, train social tolerance and behavior, refine their senses. The stimuli pattern of nature helps preventing or curing attention deficit.



↑ The garden is a space for guided activities (teaching, therapy), but at the same time it is intended for children to play freely, without instructions. Just being present in a garden can have a therapeutic effect on an individual, even if specific therapeutic techniques are not being used to support them.



↑ Green spaces strengthen children, they become more resilient, and help them work better with stress, anxiety or depression.



→ The colourful garden encourages exploration, stimulates new questions and interests. We offer teenagers places where they can be both alone and together.



↑ The garden provides a place for group games and new experiences.



Garden safety

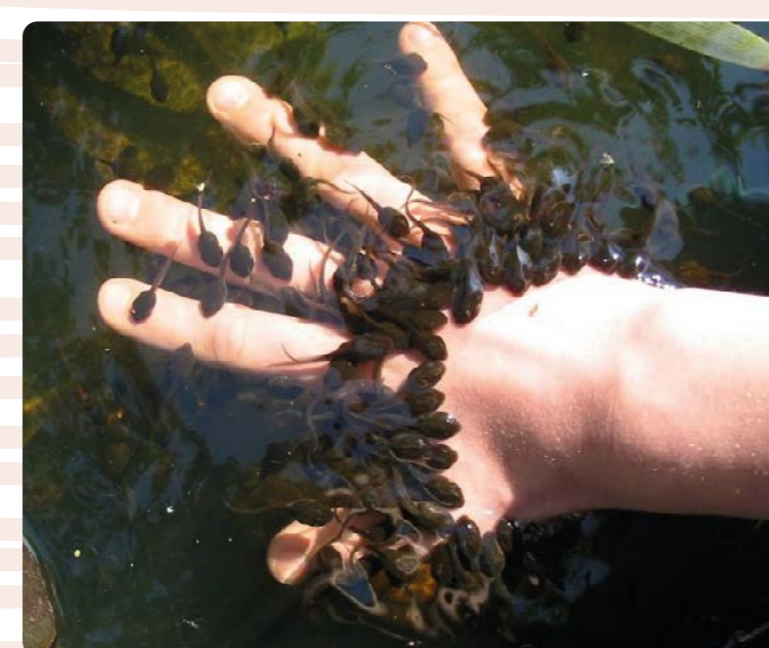


People in need of therapy are more vulnerable to accidents and infections. It is important to feel safe for mental health benefits.

↑ Hygiene is essential, especially if crops are consumed. Provide hand/crop washing facilities, e.g. a portable outdoor can.

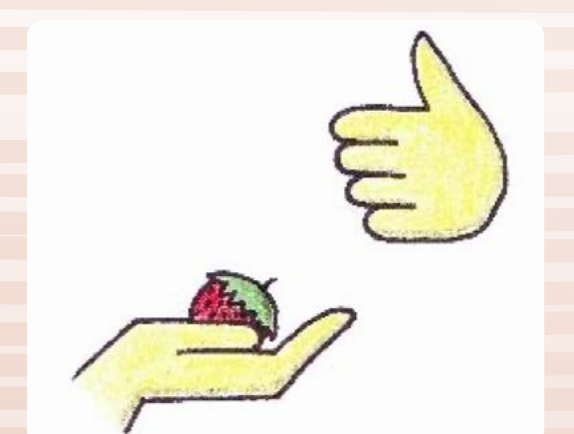


↑ Sharp edges, spiny plants, wasp's nests, broken hanging tree branches, dead animals etc. must be removed. Some risks are managed to keep in a tolerable range, and patients have to learn and adapt to it.



← In general, therapeutic gardens are maintained through organic farming, or with no chemicals. Then it is safe for the user and for the animals, that we can observe and enjoy.

→ Tools should be checked prior to use, stored and carried properly. Teach safety to the patients through simple rules, use symbols and develop self-care skills. Garden rule card: „Always ask before you eat something”.



↑ The Common Rue juice can cause a photosensitivity reaction in the sun after the contact with the skin.



↑ We do not grow inedible or poisonous plants in the garden that could lead to confusion with edible plants (e.g. Indian strawberry - *Duchesnea indica*)

