In a garden plants, shrubs, and trees appeal to many senses. Today we’d like you to see, feel, taste, smell, and listen to the things we’ve brought from many gardens. At the end, we’d like you to listen to the sounds of nature and to remember your favorite garden. It could be your own, or one you visited on a trip, or one from long ago. We hope you will then tell us about it.

SIGHT

Colors in the garden capture the senses. Warm (red/orange/yellow), effect is energizing, stimulating. Think of a field of red poppies or one of endless sunflowers on a hot, sunny day. Cool (blue/purple/white), effect is calming, soothing. Think of an all-white garden in the evening, or a border of fluffy, blue hydrangeas.

Shapes in the garden vary: weeping or cascading trees and shrubs; coarse vs fine foliage; smooth vs rough bark or leaves.
MATERIALS: colorful flowers, whatever blooming in mid-Sept. Demo gardens, home gardens

ACTIVITY: pass around colorful annuals (Demo garden?) WITH magnifiers; look at flowers closely; have participants try to NAME what they can. Tiny container USE flowers for each person, FREE-FORM BOUQUET, little can covered w/ paper filled w/ Oasis. Not too time consuming.

TOUCH

Many different textures in the garden: rough; smooth; soft; hard; prickly; silky.

MATERIALS: moss; lambs ears; rose petals; other soft flowers for “soft”. Aloe, sedum, black walnuts, magnolia leaves for smooth. Crape myrtle bark, coneflower head, fungus for rough. Dried money plant, sea oats, cosmos foliage for feathery, fuzzy, paper-y.

ACTIVITY: “petting garden”, PASS around moss, lambs ear, rose petals, other soft/silky plants to FEEL. Place other materials in front of residents randomly. Call out category, ask who has that in front of her.

SMELL

Every plant has its own scent. Different scents can alter your mood. Heavy scents like jasmine, honeysuckle, and wisteria can make you feel sleepy and relaxed. Herbs like thyme, lemon balm, and rosemary can invigorate. Cooking herbs can stimulate appetite. Some plants release fragrance in sun, some in the evening.

Crush-and-smell is one form of plant recognition.

MATERIALS: pine needles; lemon balm; agastache; marigold, rosemary; thyme; oregano. Paper cups. (could make little “cups” from newspaper)

ACTIVITY: pass around materials; ask participants to CRUSH, SMELL, and identify. Label underside of cups, after each person has “guessed” then turn it over for the answer.
TASTE

Many plants are edible: fruits and veg; herbs; flowers (pansies, calendulas, nasturtium).

MATERIALS: capers; mint; parsley; basil. (4 items); tiny tomatoes; Cut in very small pieces. *mouse melons*

ACTIVITY: pass around little cups with sample, CRUSH AND TASTE (leaves). Label underside of cups as in the “smell” activity previously, ** Checked w/dietitian, she helped pass out, knew who could handle what**

HEARING

Imagine the loveliest garden you’ve been in. Perhaps it was your own, or that of a relative or friend. Or maybe you visited it on a trip to a local park or another state or country. Close your eyes now and listen to the sounds of nature, birds, wind, and water.

MATERIALS: CD of nature sounds, provided, about 5 minutes, flute music, waves, water, wind and chimes

ACTIVITY: please tell us your favorite garden memory…

LIST OF MATERIALS

Tiny paper cups or soufflé cups for samples
Cardboard box tops to pass around materials
Buckets or containers for holding flowers
Small cans, glue, materials to cover
Hand held magnifiers (borrowed and bought)
Colorful annuals, whatever is looking good in mid-Sept.
Fragrant lilies (will have to buy and share)
Moss, lambs ear, rose petals for “soft:
Aloe, sedum, magnolia leaves for “smooth”
Bark, coneflower seed heads for “rough”
Dried money plant. Sea oats, dried grasses for “paper-y”
Cosmos for “feathery”, ?others
Pine needles for “fine”
Herbs for taste testing and fragrance ID
Fragrant foliage: marigold, mum, agastache, lemon balm, catmint
Any other fragrant plants/flowers as available
Nature sounds CD, personal collection
Wind chimes if available from other MGs

Resources:

decraven.wordpress.com/assignment-2, “Digital Media” “Sensory Garden Design for the Five Senses”

www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep117, “Sensory Gardens”

www.gardenforever.com

www.caga.org, “Five Senses Garden Area”

www.3.ag.purdue.edu, “Gardening for the Senses”, Larry Caplan

www.spiritualityhealth.com, “Create a Garden of the Senses”

www.news.yahoo.com/sensory-gardens-create-haven, Yahoo!news

EVALUATION:

Low cost but labor intensive. Natural materials all free but collecting was very time consuming. Also heading into fall not as much blooming. Thanks for the Demo Garden.

Carrying out the program needed extra hands: passing out materials; helping folks handle and identify; using magnifying glasses; tasting/smelling. It was a busy hour.

Needed to involve dietitian who would know the residents issues with chewing, swallowing, food allergies, etc. Monitoring those things slowed the program a bit.

No time to "listen to nature sounds and share garden memories”. That might be better as a separate activity.

Had to do some research on therapeutic recreation activities, mostly “how to” involve those with diminished hearing/sight/attention