

Sensory Gardens

All landscapes provide conscious and/or unconscious sensory input. Sensory gardens, trails and landscapes are specifically designed to create a range of sensory experiences. Most are planned with the intent of encouraging users to actively explore, listen, touch, pick, crush and otherwise experience and interact with the garden environment. Plant selections and space layout for a planned sensory garden needs to be safe for users and robust enough to tolerate inquisitive hands. Ongoing maintenance is important. Most gardens are designed to be inviting, relaxing and comfortable. Some are additionally designed to stimulate, invigorate, engage, evoke memories, trigger communication and/or teach a variety of skills.

Our five external senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste) are important in helping us take in and respond to information in the world around us. Most sensory gardens are designed to stimulate multiple of these external sensory systems. Additional systems helping us take in and process information in our internal world. Individuals may be particularly sensitive (hypersensitive) or under sensitive (hyposensitive) to sensory input from any sensory systems. Sensory Gardens planned for the public or special populations are often designed with features to address populations with specific challenges in one or more sensory systems. Fragrances, color combinations or textures that some find relaxing, comforting or interesting might be unpleasant or overwhelming to others. For example, individuals with vision, balance and/or mobility concerns might benefit and enjoy even paths with gentle turns; enclosed gardens with circular paths; clear signage (braille/pictures); quiet spots in sun and shade to sit / rest / pause to smell or listen to a bird or fountain; experiencing or listening to footsteps on wood, gravel or grass.

EYES / VISION	EARS / SOUND	SKIN / TOUCH	TONGUE / TASTE	NOSE / SMELL
COLORS Warm / Cool Relax / Stimulate ACCESSIBLE HEIGHT DISTANCE VARY TEXTURES SUN/SHADE PATTERNS SHAPE CONTRAST WATER FEATURES VIEW FROM SEATING VIEW FROM WINDOW ITEMS OF INTEREST: FOR DISCOVERY FUN PLANTERS SEASONAL INTEREST	PLANTS TO ATTRACT: INSECTS & BIRDS WATER FEATURES (CONSIDER SAFETY) WINDCHIMES WIND IN TREES AND GRASSES VARY PATH TEXTURES (CONSIDER SAFETY) EX. PEBBLES CRUSHED GRAVEL GRASS STONE PAVERS THYME	SOFT PETALS STIFF FLOWERS Coneflower Center LEAVES Thick / Fleshy Velvety / Furry Smooth / Lacy FERNS LICHENS DRY & WET SMOOTH STONES SUN & SHADE TREE BARK WATER (SAFETY) SOFT GRASSES	CULINARY HERBS BASIL MINTS CHIVES DILL / SAGE CILANTRO ROSEMARY VEGETABLES TOMATO PEAS EDIBLE FLOWERS PANSY BORAGE NASTURTIUM BERRIES SMALL FRUITS	AROMATIC HERBS LAVENDER SAGE BASIL MINTS LEMON BALM ROSEMARY MANY FLOWERS TREES & SHRUBS LILAC / ROSE MOCK ORANGE CEDAR/ BALSAM FIR STONE FEATURES HAY VEGETABLES FRUITS MULCH SOIL SEASONAL SPRING/CHRISTMAS