



Mindful Gardens

SENSORY & WELLNESS DESIGN

Sensory Garden
Information booklet



Designs That Enrich Your Senses

At Mindful Gardens, we craft unique and personal designs that bring your dream space to life.

With a focus on Sensory and Wellness, our designs aim to stimulate your senses and soothe your mind.

We can create designs in an array of themes suiting all types of budgets, and we will be with you on your mindfulness journey from design concept to realisation.

Some Background

RTE Super Garden 2024 finalist Gary Hegarty is the designer behind Mindful Gardens.

With a personal interest and passion for Sensory and Wellness Design, Gary wants to highlight the many great benefits of bringing mindfulness to your outside space and its importance especially for those who are neurodivergent.

With a formal education consisting of a Bachelor of Design (Honours) from UU, a Foundation Degree (FdSc) in Horticulture from CAFRE as well as a personal understanding of ASD, Gary applies his years of knowledge and experience to create unique designs for both commercial and domestic clients.

Commercial Sensory Gardens

We have observed that throughout the country, outdoor apparatus is given a priority at the expense of planting. However, we would like to change that.

Here at Mindful Gardens, we like to promote that more emphasis should be given to planting within a sensory setting, as being immersed in nature is not only beneficial for mental health and social interaction, but can also be used as an educational tool.



Why are Sensory Gardens so important?

Awakening the Senses

A sensory garden is a carefully curated space that stimulates all five senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

Each element within the garden is thoughtfully selected to provide a multi-dimensional experience that captivates the senses and fosters a deep connection with the natural world.

From vibrant flowers that delight the eyes to fragrant herbs that tantalise the sense of smell, a sensory garden offers a sensory feast that can be enjoyed by everyone.

Therapeutic Benefits

For individuals who are neurodivergent, a sensory garden can offer a sanctuary for relaxation and sensory exploration.

The calming sounds of rustling leaves, the textures of different plants and surfaces, and the gentle sunlight filtering through the foliage can provide therapeutic benefits that soothe the mind and reduce anxiety.

Being immersed in a sensory-rich environment can also help improve focus, attention, and overall well-being.

Promoting Social Interaction

In addition to the individual benefits, a sensory garden can also serve as a communal space that promotes social interaction and engagement.

People of all ages and abilities can come together to enjoy the sights, smells, and sounds of the garden, fostering a sense of community and connection. Whether it's through shared gardening activities or simply enjoying the beauty of the space together, a sensory garden can create opportunities for meaningful interactions and relationships to flourish.

Educational Opportunities

Beyond its therapeutic and social benefits, a sensory garden also presents valuable educational opportunities. For children and adults alike, exploring the garden can be a hands-on learning experience that deepens their understanding of nature, plant life, and the environment.

Through observation, touch, and interaction with the garden's elements, individuals can develop a greater appreciation for the natural world and gain valuable knowledge about sustainability and biodiversity.



Awaken The Senses

Tips on bringing Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste & Touch to your outdoor space.



Cornflower
Centaurea cyanus

Sight

Select a variety of plants ranging in colors, shapes, and sizes. Bright flowers, colorful foliage, and architectural plants like sunflowers and ornamental grasses, create a visually stimulating and tranquil environment.

The choice of colours serve a purpose. Bright red, yellow, or orange flowers help create stimulating and cheery areas, while cool colors like blue, purple, and white help create soothing, tranquil effects.

Hardscaping elements play their part also as features can create light and shadow, adding an extra visual interest.



Carex
Carex 'Everlime'

Sound

Sound can help you feel relaxed and at ease, just close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. It is a great way of 'being in the moment'.

Sound can be achieved in many ways in a Sensory Garden, from the rustling of leaves to the meditative trickling of water from a water feature.

Planting is a great way of creating sound through the use of plants such as ornamental grasses, small to medium sized trees and bamboo. Sound can be especially important if you are visually impaired or for those who have memory loss.



Lavender
Lavandula angustifolia

Smell

Fragrant plants are a great way to get people to interact with the space, to stop and smell the roses.

Herbs are also a cost effective way of bringing fragrance to the garden and can be used to create a micro sensory garden. If pushed for space, why not create a raised planter full of herbs for everyone to enjoy.



Chamomile
Chamaemelum nobile

Taste

Taste can be achieved in a variety of ways, from the use of herbs in cooking, to incorporating edibles within the space.

Edibles such as strawberries or fruit trees can also be used to teach about where fruit and veg comes from, and how it is grown.



Himalayan Birch
Betula utilis var. jacquemontii

Touch

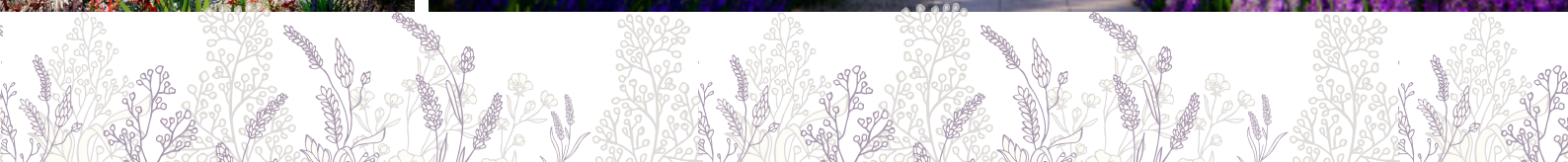
Heighten the sensation of touch in the garden through the use of soft, fuzzy, rough, smooth, and spiky plants, bark, stones, and water.

Use plants such as Lamb's Ear for its soft, velvety leaves, Ornamental Grasses with feathery flowerheads, a peeling bark of a Himalayan birch tree, large rocks and pebbles, and also the cool sensation of water.




Example 3D Designs

3D Designs & Animation, covering all angles of the space. We will provide designs which show different design perspectives of the space and a walk through animation so you can be truly immersed and experience your dream space.



EXAMPLE MAINTENANCE & PLANTING PLAN

In-depth, covering all aspect of garden maintenance. Planting Plan detailing variety, quantity and plant positioning.




Climbing Rose & Shrub Rose


SPRING:
To increase flower heads in summer, roses can be fed with a fertilizer containing water to use on eight, a maximum of twice a week once in spring, and once again in mid to late summer.

SUMMER:
Feed with fertilizer to increase flower heads by cutting dead or dying flowers from the plant.

WINTER:
In temperate climates, rose can be pruned in late or early spring, when the first growth is beginning. This is generally between January and February. Don't worry about cutting too much. Roses are extremely strong and will grow back.



Above: Cut back stems to one third of their original length.




Hydrangea Grandiflora Half Standard

SPRING:
To increase flower heads in summer, hydrangea can be fed with the same feed used on the roses.


SUMMER:
Increase flower heads by cutting dead or dying flowers from the plant.

AUTUMN:
Deadhead plant to prepare for winter and new growth in spring.




Lavender (see info on page 11)

ADDITIONAL INFO:
Not to be confused with the plant 'heath' which is heather.




Jasmine

ADDITIONAL INFO:
Not summer dead when the plant is close to reveal as use it can be supported and cut using string around the poles, and covered with a fine plastic or cloth. The jasmine will cover the entire pergola roof.



Nepeta

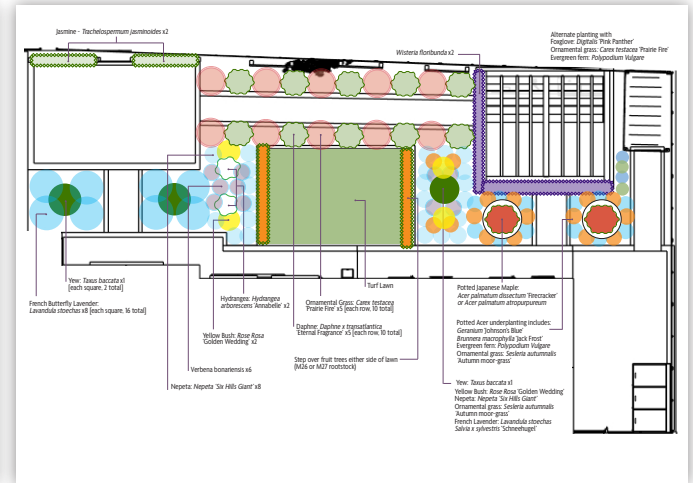
ADDITIONAL INFO:
Cut back after flowering has finished to keep the plant compact.



Verbena bonariensis

ADDITIONAL INFO:
Verbena needs very little care, just water in dry spells. They die back in winter and self seed in the spring/summer.

Example Maintenance Plan



Example Planting Plan



WORKSHOPS & CONSULTATIONS

Workshops

We offer a variety of workshops which can be tailored for all age groups.

Workshops can be provided as a one off event, or blended together to create a workshop structure that best suits you. Listed below are the workshops available, from gardening on a budget, to designing your own space.

- How to design your garden
 - Gardening on a budget
 - Create a Wellness Garden
 - Create a Sensory Garden
 - Growing from seed
 - Where does your food come from?
 - Building planters
 - Make a miniature Sensory Garden
 - Plant a veg box
 - Taking cuttings & grafting
 - Propagation
 - Planting baskets & planters
 - Multiply your plants
- & many more.

Consultation

Sometimes a client may just need some advice, and we are here to help, in person and also virtually.

We offer consultations on all aspects of horticulture such as:

- Planting choice
- Garden Design
- Soil & Plant Health
- Landscaping materials
- Gardening on a budget
- Designing your garden on a budget
- Sustainable gardening
- Gardening for native planting
- Rewilding

And many, many more.

Project Management

We can project manage your build. We can source and deliver goods and plant material, and also ensure that your build remains on schedule.

We will be on hand to answer and address all your concerns during the process.



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Mindfulgardensni.com
info@mindfulgardensni.com
Gary - 07731831922

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