

DIGGING IN

NOVA SCOTIA HORTICULTURE FOR HEALTH NETWORK

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The Nova Scotia Horticulture for Health Network is a coalition of people interested in supporting horticulture for health initiatives through resource-sharing, exchange of practices/knowledge, and networking.



Collaborations Strengthen People-Plant Programming

By Lesley Fleming, HTR, Beth House, BRec, Annie Ferguson, Nicola Nemy, Tim Mason, Jennifer Smith, LLM, & Christina Wilson, MSW, RSW

Photos by L. Fleming

People-plant programming spans a wide array of activities. These can be enhanced through collaborations ([Ball-Damberg & Stivland, 2025](#)). Benefits of collaboration can include:

- Expertise provided by collaborating organizations
- Inclusion and participation by a broader audience and stakeholders
- Networking opportunities

One such example of effective collaboration; in the summer of 2025, was an in-person gathering organized by the Nova Scotia Horticulture for Health Network (NSHHN). It took place at Halifax, Nova Scotia's Common Roots Urban Farm BiHi (CRUF BiHi), with hands-on activities delivered by the Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia and 100 Folk Farms. The collaboration among the four organizations drew participants with diverse backgrounds who shared a common interest in people-plant programs. Examining the nature of each collaborating organization's expertise and focus demonstrates how collaborations can enhance an event, a theme, or a therapeutic focus.

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Photo top right: L. Fleming

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Common Roots Urban Farm BiHi: A tour of the urban farm by Nicola Nemy, the BiHi farm site's Coordinator, highlighted the local facilities and services that support food production. With 107 plots, a market garden, and unique collaborations with groups like Nourish Nova Scotia, the NS Health Community Health Teams, the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and the YWCA, [CRUF BiHi](#) uses plant-specific activities to engage newcomers, immigrants, and people who experience food insecurity. Their people-plant programming includes free on-site events, educational workshops, a free seed library, tool lending, therapeutic horticulture, special events and markets.



Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia: Participating in the NSHHN event, Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia ([ASNS](#)) took the opportunity to provide community outreach and educational information about Alzheimer's and dementia to participants. Education Coordinator Beth House shared information on services and programs with basic facts on Alzheimer's and dementia within this plant-focused event introducing the Forget Me Not flower, the national symbol of Alzheimer Societies across the country. Volunteer Jennifer Smith, along with Beth House led participants in making three different types of biodegradable seed pots for planting Forget Me Not seeds, donated by ASNS.



100 Folk Farm: Experienced gardeners and those new to gardening got their hands dirty making stinkpots from clay, compost, wool and straw. These became organic receptacles for pollinator plants like echinacea, bee balm and coreopsis. The benefits of these (not actually stinky) pots highlighted ways people can support sustainable plant and wildlife practices and the importance of pollination for food production, beauty and biodiversity. These types of activities are delivered on-site at the [100 Folk Farm](#), off-site at libraries, Scotsburn Community Food Forest, Scotsburn Elementary School, Northumberland Regional High School, Pictou Landing First Nations School and Tatamagouche Academy and NSCC Stellarton Campus, where Annie Ferguson, farm owner, integrates nature connections and ecology into plant programming. This connection was facilitated by the Atlantic Master Gardeners Program and Dalhousie University.



Nova Scotia Horticulture for Health Network: Collaboration with local groups to promote the health benefits of people-plant interactions is the mandate of [NSHHN](#). Since its inception in 2000, NSHHN (formerly called Nova Scotia Horticultural Therapy Association) has initiated and supported horticulture-focused activities using its five themed areas of focus: horticulture-health services, hort-focused social interactions, landscapes for health, food/nutrition/food action, and horticulture practices ([Fleming, 2021](#)).

As this event demonstrated, people-plant programming can provide a variety of benefits and experiences, providing different things to different participants. Collaborative people-plant programming can provide interesting, multifaceted experiences demonstrating the interplay between horticulture, food production, special populations, and ecology, with networking opportunities for the future.

Ball-Damberg, H., & Stivland, G. (2025). [Models of collaboration and the intersection of outdoor education, therapeutic horticulture, and horticultural therapy in a public school setting.](#) [Youtube].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHKF-YjHT3A>

Fleming, L.L. (2021). [Horticulture for health framework.](#) *Acta Horticulturae*, 1330.



Perspectives on Collaborative People-Plant Events

Collaboration between organizations for people-plant programming can offer multiple areas of interest, education and benefits, as evidenced by participants' comments from the NSHHN July 8, 2025 summer gathering at CRUF BiHi:

“I enjoyed the energy and enthusiasm of the other participants! I really needed that boost, and to connect with others who are excited about the same types of things... I felt energized and more positive, especially about my current preoccupation with my career next steps... the hopeful nature of sowing and tending plants - it is inherently optimistic. Hands-on, practical activity is also a good way to get out of a cycle of overthinking and inaction.” Jennifer Smith, Volunteer & Policy Analyst

“I’m really grateful for the collaboration and will definitely be sharing these [activities, ideas and connections] with our community.” Nicola Nemy, CRUF BiHi Farm Coordinator

“The stinkpot activity was a highlight, mine has actually germinated something so that's an unexpected surprise bonus!” Tim Mason, Nature-based Gardener

“I've got ideas for new connections for my workplace for both staff and clients. I'm on the wellness committee at work, so I can see a staff activity happening and learning about programming at CRUF I can share with clients.” Beth House, Education Coordinator
Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia

“What do you think it is about plants/horticulture that lends themselves to these positive feelings & behaviors for you? Nature heals us in ways words (psychotherapy alone) cannot so I am benefitting greatly as a therapist to bring nature into healing work.”
Christina G. Wilson, Clinical Social Worker (focus on healing trauma and loss)

THAD Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Database

Activity: Planting Goal: Social Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Forget Me Not Flowers, Dementia & Seed Pots

Text by Lesley Fleming, HTR & Beth House, BRec

Photo by W. Warby, L. Fleming, Cambridge Pavers

Original Publication: Fleming, L., & House, B. (2025). [TH Activity Plan – Forget Me Not Flowers, Dementia & Seed Pots](#). University of Florida Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database.



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make biodegradable seed pots for planting Forget Me Not seeds, these associated with Alzheimer Disease & dementia.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Expand knowledge about this flower, connections to dementia; follow sequential steps

Physical: Strengthen fine motor skills & hand-eye coordination

Psychological/Emotional: Identify family members & connections to dementia; discuss delayed gratification & plant growth/blooms

Sensory: Expand tolerance for tactile materials

Social: Discuss advocacy, awareness & understanding of health issues like dementia; participate in service project

Materials

Toilet rolls, scissors, potting soil, seeds, water

Cardboard egg cartons, scissors, potting soil, seeds

Newspaper, scissors, jar or other form to create shape, potting soil, seeds, gloves

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials, information about Alzheimer’s disease & dementia, & make samples. Grow flowers ahead of session if possible.
2. Facilitator begins session by sharing the connection between Forget Me Not flowers & dementia/Alzheimer’s. Introduce several methods of creating seed pots for these or other seeds. The focus can include sustainable gardening practices. Materials are distributed for each seed pot when that type is presented.
3. **Toilet Paper or Paper Towel Tubes Method:** Cut rolls into 3” sections, cutting 1” slits in 4 places at one end. Fold the pieces to form a bottom. Fill with potting soil. Sow seeds. Peel off cardboard before planting seedlings in ground once germination has occurred.
4. **Egg Carton Method:** Poke a hole in each pocket (cardboard cartons preferred vs styrofoam). Fill with soil, sow seeds & keep moist. Transfer to in-ground garden, removing seedlings from seed pots.
5. **Newspaper Pots Method:** Cut newspaper (not glossy magazine paper) into long strips taller than the jar used for shaping seed pot. Fold a flap along the length of paper, unfolding this before rolling strip around jar. Twist the loose ends to create a base & push down to secure. Create a rim for sturdier construction using the pre-folded edge. Add soil, sow seeds & though these are biodegradable, it is recommended to remove paper pot before transplanting into ground.
6. Discussing Forget Me Not flowers, floral symbols for dementia & other charitable causes & ways participants can support health or environmental causes can promote positive & meaningful community & ecological efforts along with self-esteem.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Gardening and plant tasks undertaken with people living with dementia can take many forms. (Refer to [THAD Community Gardening – Dementia Populations](#)). This TH activity making biodegradable seed pots can be modified to accommodate people with dementia, memory loss or other health challenges. For people living with dementia, and depending on their abilities, propensity for putting items in their mouths or safety using scissors, parts of the activity can be undertaken excluding soil, seeds or scissors if these may cause safety concerns. Making the seed pots can be good physical activity for strengthening fingers, hand movements and hand-eye coordination. Making seed pots can also contribute to sense of accomplishment, and contributing to a group service project where others will plant the seeds and grow the Forget Me Nots in the seed pots.



This activity can be delivered where all three types of seed pots are made, or only one is selected, if this suits the population better. For groups that may find verbal directions challenging, using visual cues, and reducing the types of seed pots to one type may work best. Similarly, discussing the connection between Forget Me Not flowers and dementia can be introduced to groups who may find this cognitive part engaging and interesting.



“Alzheimer societies have chosen the Forget Me Not flower as a symbol to represent memory loss, one of the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. The Forget Me Not is also a reminder to remember people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, as well as their caregivers. The three flowers in the symbol represent the person with dementia, the caregiver and the Alzheimer Society” (Alzheimer Society Canada, (ASC) 2025).

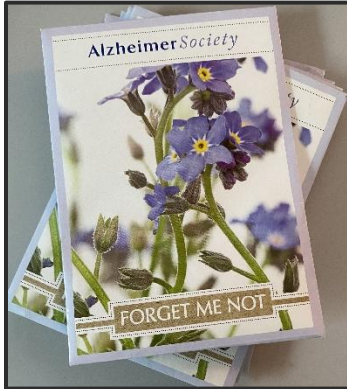


SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Parts of this activity can be undertaken excluding soil, seeds or scissors if these may cause safety concerns regarding the propensity for putting items in their mouths (seeds or soil) or safely using scissors. Gloves can be provided and should be used by people with skin abrasions or compromised immune systems.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: “The tiny blue five petalled flowers with yellow centers, known as Forget Me Nots, have become symbols of Alzheimer awareness across the globe. It is *Myosotis* spp. that is featured on pins, badges and educational materials. Forget Me Not flowers from the Boraginaceae family of plants, in the *Myosotis* genus consists of 153 species (Lee, 2024). Often grow in masses, the more common varieties are *Myosotis sylvatica* (woodland variety), and *Myosotis scorpioides* (aquatic variety). Various varieties of Forget Me Nots live as perennials, biennials or as annuals and can be blue, pink, white and purple. They are self-seeding, can be grown from seed, and are adaptable, able to thrive in a variety of environments. Some species of Forget Me Nots can be invasive” (House & Fleming, 2026).

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- Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025.
- TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.



The Connection Between Forget Me Not Flowers and Alzheimer's Societies

Text by Beth House, BRec & Lesley Fleming, HTR

Graphic & photos by B. House, Alzheimer's Society & Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia

The tiny blue five-petaled flowers with yellow centers, known as Forget Me Nots have become symbols of Alzheimer's awareness across the globe. The flowers are featured on pins, badges and educational materials.

Forget Me Not flowers from the Boraginaceae family of plants, in the *Myosotis* genus consist of 153 species (Lee, 2024). They often grow in masses. Various varieties of Forget Me Nots live as perennials, biennials or as annuals and can be blue, pink, white and purple. They are self-seeding, can be grown from seed, and are adaptable, able to thrive in a variety of environments. The most common species are *Myosotis sylvatica* (woodland variety), and *Myosotis scorpioides* (aquatic variety). Note that some species of Forget Me Nots can be invasive. Symbolic meanings for Forget Me Nots date back to 15th century folklore and Victorian times' language of flowers, representing remembrance, loyalty, and enduring love (Puff, 2022).

Alzheimer's societies chose the Forget Me Not flower as a symbol to represent memory loss, one of the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. The Forget Me Not is also a reminder to remember people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, as well as their caregivers. The three flowers in the symbol represent the person with dementia, the caregiver and the Alzheimer Society (Alzheimer Society Canada (ASC), 2025).



Alzheimer societies across Canada that comprise the Alzheimer Society Federation (The Alzheimer Society Federation, 2025) as well as other Alzheimer societies globally including the UK Alzheimer Society, use Forget Me Nots as floral symbols demonstrating support for Alzheimer's Societies, often because a family member or loved one has dementia, and in support of awareness about this health condition. It is not used to identify someone with dementia. A campaign for raising awareness and wearing the badges typically occurs in the month of June as well as during several awareness events throughout the year (Alzheimer's, 2025).

The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia, like the other individual provinces with local Alzheimer Societies banded together to form a federation in Canada. Today the provincial societies stand alone and share resources. The Alzheimer Society of Canada (ASC) also stands alone and is an equal partner with the provincial counterparts. The provinces focus on supporting their provincial population. ASC supports provincial societies with resources, but not oversight or governance and has a slightly different mandate.

The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia is a leading not-for-profit health charity working to improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians affected by dementia and advance the search for the cause and cure. Since 1983, ASNS has served Nova Scotians living with dementia and those connected to them. It is active in communities across the province, offering help to people living with dementia, their care partners, healthcare professionals and the public. Education and support delivered through programs and services are available, as well as hope for tomorrow through research funding for finding the cause and the cure.

Alzheimer's Society. (2025). [What does our blue flower badge represent?](#) *Alzheimers.org.uk*.

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Beth House is the Education Coordinator of the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia. With a therapeutic recreation background specializing in geriatric populations, Beth spent 20 years working in long-term care, enhancing the quality of life for the residents she served. Lesley Fleming, HTR has delivered TH activities to people living with dementia and Alzheimer's in a variety of senior living facilities.

Alzheimer Awareness Events Throughout the Year:

[Alzheimer's Awareness Month | Alzheimer Society of Canada](#) – January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month in Canada, with the Alzheimer Society leading efforts to educate the public.

[World Alzheimer's Month](#) is observed in September and focuses on raising awareness, challenging stigma, and supporting the dementia community, recognizing September 21st as World Alzheimer's Day.

[Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month | Alzheimer's Association](#) (US Based) – June is recognized in some regions as Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month, with a focus on “going purple” to raise awareness and encourage global conversation about the brain and dementia. Some also recognize “the longest day” June 21st.

What is dementia?

Alzheimer Society
NOVA SCOTIA

We all forget things, experience changes in our mood, or mix-up our words from time-to-time. But when this begins to affect our day-to-day functioning, it could be a sign of a condition called dementia.

What is dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a series of different diseases or conditions that affect a person's brain. Dementia is a difficult and complicated syndrome that can include symptoms like memory loss, changes in mood or behaviour, and difficulties with thinking or language that are severe enough to affect a person's day-to-day life. Dementia is progressive, which means the symptoms will gradually get worse over time.

There are many different diseases that can cause dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Regardless of the cause, it can be frightening, making it difficult to seek help.

But there is help.

Learning how to live well with dementia, and how to manage the symptoms, can help you gain control and confidence along your journey. The Alzheimer Society is here to provide you with the support and information to do just that, no matter where you are on this journey.









People may think dementia is a normal part of aging. It is not.

There are important differences between symptoms of dementia and normal aspects of aging:

Normal Aging	Dementia
Forgetting events from a year ago.	Forgetting details from recent events.
Becoming lost occasionally.	Becoming lost frequently or in familiar places.
Occasionally struggling to find words.	Frequently pausing and using substitutions when trying to find words.
Able to speak clearly and well.	Increase in slurred speech and other language problems.
Predictable and stable moods.	Unpredictable changes in mood and behaviour.
Able to follow and participate in conversations.	Difficulty in following or participating in conversations; frequent repetition of questions and stories.
Ability to perform everyday tasks like paying bills and shopping.	Difficulty with remembering to do everyday tasks, like paying bills or shopping without difficulty.

An early diagnosis can help slow the progression of the disease.

A dementia diagnosis does not mean your life as you know it has stopped. Research shows an early diagnosis with proper intervention can help slow down the progression of dementia. This can help people continue to have full lives for a long time after diagnosis. While the symptoms will get worse over time, there are treatment options and therapies available. Making lifestyle changes that encourage brain health can also help delay the onset of dementia and slow its progression. These include:

 <p>Exercising your brain with new cognitive exercises, like learning a new language or instrument.</p>	 <p>Protecting your head from injury.</p>
 <p>Staying socially connected with friends, family and neighbours.</p>	 <p>Being physically active.</p>
 <p>Eating a healthy diet by including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts in your meals.</p>	 <p>Taking care of your hearing by getting annual evaluations and wearing a hearing aid, if needed.</p>
 <p>Visiting your doctor or other healthcare providers regularly.</p>	 <p>Quitting smoking and reducing alcohol intake.</p>

The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia can help.

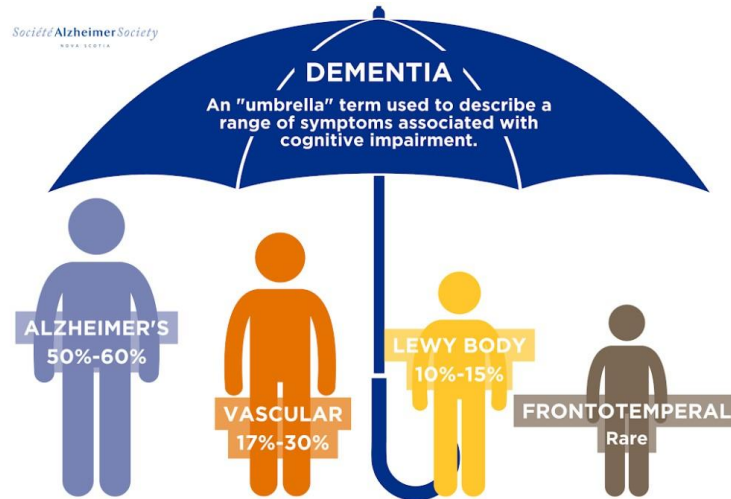
For more information about dementia or to access support, please contact us. The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia is a leading health charity working to improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and to advance the search for a cause and cure. Staff and volunteers provide programs, educational resources and referral services to support people living with dementia and their caregivers.



Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia
 112-2719 Gladstone St., Halifax, NS B3K 4W6
 Phone: 902-422-7961 | Toll-Free: 1-800-611-6345 | Fax: 902-422-7971
 Email: alzheimer@asns.ca | Website: www.alzheimer.ca/ns
 Facebook: Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia | Twitter: @AlzheimerNS
 Charitable registration number: 10670 5379 RR0001



Beth House, Education Coordinator of the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia facilitated the reprint permission granted by Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia.



The Difference Between Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias

Text by Alzheimer's Society of Canada

Graphic by Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia

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<https://alzheimer.ca/en/about-dementia/what-alzheimers-disease/difference-between-alzheimers-disease-other-dementias>

Overview

While the terms "Alzheimer's disease" and "dementia" are often used interchangeably, it's important to know the difference between the two.

- **Dementia** is not one specific disease. Rather, it's an umbrella term for a set of symptoms caused by physical disorders affecting the brain.
- **Alzheimer's disease** is the most common cause of dementia, accounting for 60-80% of all diagnoses.

Overall, know that Alzheimer's disease is a specific disease, while dementia is a general term for a group of similar diseases, of which Alzheimer's is one.

In other words, every case of Alzheimer's disease is an example of dementia, but not every type of dementia is Alzheimer's. Learn more about the [other types of dementia](#).

Symptoms

The [symptoms of dementia](#) include:

- Memory loss, both short-term and long-term,
- Difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language that are severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities, and
- Changes in mood or behaviour.

The [symptoms for Alzheimer's disease](#) mostly overlap with other types of dementia, but there can be some differences.

For example: Other dementias can focus more on certain symptoms, and less on others. In the case of [frontotemporal dementia](#), changes in personality are more apparent in the early stage, while memory decline often doesn't arise until the later stage.

Affected areas of the brain

The differences in [symptoms](#) can be explained by the area of the brain each type of dementia affects.

For example: While [Alzheimer's disease generally affects most of the brain](#), frontotemporal dementia primarily affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain – the areas generally associated with personality and behaviour.

This explains why changes in personality are usually more obvious in the early stage of frontotemporal dementia than in the [early stage of Alzheimer's](#).

Risk factors

[Risk factors](#) between different types of dementia also overlap, but there are some types that are more determined by a certain risk factor than others.

For example: Stroke is now understood to be a common cause of [vascular dementia](#). When a stroke occurs and the brain's blood supply is blocked or damaged, brain cells are deprived of oxygen and die, leading to dementia. Because of that, having a stroke increases the risk of getting vascular dementia.

Genetics is a pronounced risk factor for [Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease](#), one of the rarest types of dementia. If a parent has a mutation in their human prion protein gene, the chances that they will pass down Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease are 50% for each child.

Treatments

Because of the differences in symptoms, affected areas of the brain and possible causes, a treatment that works for one type of dementia may not be effective for another type.

For example: While there are [four medications available that can fight the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease](#), there are no known treatments to slow the progression of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Other resources from Nova Scotia Alzheimer Society:

[What is Dementia?](#)

[What is Alzheimer's Disease?](#)

[10 Warning Signs of Dementia](#)

[How to Respond and Recognize to Stigma About Young Onset Dementia](#)

[What's the Difference Between Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia? Video](#)

Video source: What's the difference between Alzheimer's Disease and dementia? [FreeDem Films](#), 2013. This video was created by Dr. Sabina Brennan of Trinity College Dublin and Trinity Brain Health. Permission to use this video was granted by Trinity Brain Health, which reserves all rights.



Series: Part 4 of 5

Practitioner Tool: Therapeutic Horticulture Goals with THAD Activity Examples: Social Domain

Text by Lesley Fleming, HTR

Photo by OregonLive.com & L. Fleming

“Social functioning encompasses social skills, social behavior, cognition and communication essential during inter-personal interactions. The fields of psychology, neuroscience, education and mental health identify social interactions, and challenges or deficits to these as important throughout the lifespan (Cordier et al., 2015). Therapeutic services addressing challenges in the social health domain are critical” (Fleming et al., 2024).

This health domain and challenges related to social functioning are broad. They include facets of wellbeing in addition to dysfunction related to interpersonal interactions, lack of self-awareness, social awareness, and socially appropriate behavior. Social emotional learning, its dimensions, and strategies like positive action and conscious discipline are being integrated more broadly across sectors in educational and health interventions including HT/TH because of the important role social functioning plays in human health (Grimes, 2024; CASEL, 2020; Conscious Discipline, n.d.; Fleming et al., 2024). Self-regulation is another health area that is receiving more attention within HT/TH practice, one that recognizes autonomic inputs affecting social behavior as well as personality, disposition, temperament, culture and family history (Cordier et al., 2015; Fleming et al., 2023). The type and variety of social domain therapeutic goals are broad.

“Therapeutic goals are an essential component of therapeutic horticulture practice. In this fourth article of the 5-part series, therapeutic goals are identified by the social health domain, intended to be used as an index for identifying possible goals. Previously published articles have covered [cognitive/intellectual](#), [physical](#), and [psychological/emotional](#) health domains. The fifth article will

focus on the sensory health domain. In each article and domain, examples from THAD ([therapeutic horticulture activities database](#)) have been selected to demonstrate applications for use in therapeutic horticulture interventions.

Setting therapeutic goals is based on client assessment and need, working toward specific outcomes, which can be measured informally or clinically charted. Achieving desired health outcomes requires intention, therapeutic techniques and client engagement.

Therapeutic goals can fall into more than one health domain. The THAD examples identify multiple therapeutic goals in each of the five domains for each activity, though typically only one or two would be emphasized in a given session.

A *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture* article, [Therapeutic Horticulture and Its Therapeutic Goals: Expanding the Scope and Practice Through the Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database and Its Use of Health Domain-Specific Goals](#) organizes TH goals also using health domains, referring to functional and goal areas, not specific therapeutic goals (Fleming et al., 2025).

This series—[Practitioners Tools](#)—identifies specific therapeutic goals intended to expand practitioner knowledge and applications” (Fleming, 2025a, b, c, d).

Social Health Domain: Therapeutic Goal + THAD Activity Examples

Goal Areas	Therapeutic Goal	THAD Examples
Personal	Work independently with reducing number of cues	Father’s Day Cards Featuring Plants & Puns (Fleming, 2025)
	Demonstrate responsible behavior, decision-making	Harvesting Herb Seeds for Culinary Activities (Fleming & Relf, 2023)
	Practice socially-appropriate dress, grooming & attitudes for work (& other) settings	Pre-employment Program Activities at Hospital Market Garden (Lindsay & Fleming, 2023)
	Manage social anxiety	Bulb Lasagna Planting (Moriarty Wroath, 2024)
	Recognize and practice tolerance of other(s), races, ethnicities, disabilities	Bush Tea (Fleming, 2025)
Communication	Improve communication skills – verbal, body language, eye contact, gestures, posture	Scalloped Edges (Fleming & Hilldinger, 2025)
	Reduce verbal and physical outbursts or threats	Drying Herb Flowers (Relf & Morgan, 2023)
	Practice prosocial communication & behavior	Watering Can Pass-Off (Grimes, 2024)

Goal Areas	Therapeutic Goal	THAD Examples
Inter-personal Interactions	Expand social awareness	Ring In the New Year: Plant Connections (Fleming, 2024)
	Practice responding appropriately to social cues	Nature Masks (Haney, 2023)
	Create a sense of belonging	Celebrating Potato Blossoms (Fleming, 2025)
	Promote positive social interactions	Love Letters to a Local Forest (Fleming, 2023)
	Use humor & shared laughter as coping mechanism in group setting	Radish Seed Necklace (Willis, Fleming & Carroll, 2023)
	Share personal growth goals, experiences, discussion with others	Personal Growth Metaphor: Deciduous Fruit Tree Pruning (Hildinger, 2024)
	Share garden space with others as tool for socialization, cooperation, community service	Newcomer Plot Gardening on Hospital Grounds (Lindsay & Fleming, 2023)
	Expand social connections	Therapeutic Nature Journalling (Stark, 2025)
	Work cooperatively in a group	Guerilla Gardening (Fleming & Bethel, 2025)
	Practice nurturing skills for plants & people	Repotting Plants (Fleming & Relf, 2023)
	Practice positive relational functioning with family, friends, peers, supervisor	Tape Bracelets with Flowers (Stivland & Fleming, 2025)
	Practice modulating hypervigilance, anxiety	Stone Angels, Guardian Angels & Behavior (Fleming & Ellis, 2024)
	Use conscious discipline &/or positive action strategies for self-regulating behavior	Georgia Red Clay Soil: A Sense of Place (Fleming & Dorn, 2025)
Community Contributions	Contribute to community by undertaking community service project	Forget Me Not Flowers, Dementia & Seed Pots (Fleming & House, 2025)

This listing of goals is not definitive, but is intended to broaden practitioner understanding and application of therapeutic goals for therapeutic horticulture delivered to multiple populations.

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Lesley Fleming, HTR, has delivered therapeutic horticulture to a variety of populations using specific therapeutic goals. She has led the THAD advisory team in developing the on-line database of therapeutic horticulture activities and their correlated therapeutic goals across health domains. Leah Diehl, RLA, HTM and Katie Grimes, HTR, MAT contributed to this article. This article is being concurrently published in Florida Horticulture for Health Network's epub [Cultivate](#).



Resources Winter 2026



Photo: Feed Nova Scotia

[Feed Nova Scotia](#), a province-wide organization comprised of a [network of food banks](#), offers meal programs, shelters for immediate food relief as well as longer-term solutions for food insecurity. Their work involves advocating for sustainable, policy-driven changes to ensure everyone in the province can live with dignity.

[Finding Food](#): Feed Nova Scotia's website has a directory, map and 211 call line to support people in need of food. Food banks might ask for ID, provide food based on household size, and use an appointment system for food distribution.

[Learning About Food Insecurity](#): Feed Nova Scotia explains food insecurity, disproportionate impact on black and indigenous households, and impacts on health, income, childcare, food access and housing.

NS Food Banks: [Caregivers Nova Scotia](#), Annapolis Area Food Bank Society, [Community Pantry @ Halifax and Region Military Family Resource Centre](#), and [Yarmouth Food Bank](#) to name a few.

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Practitioner Tool: Sensory Domain, Therapeutic Activities for Youth Sensory Gardens

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We would like to acknowledge Nova Scotia is traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are grateful for Peace and Friendship treaties. We are all Treaty people.