

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY



Fancy planting some Lady's Smock in Blythe Valley's country park?! We're running a new workshop at Blythe Valley on 27th March at 12pm – for more info on how to get involved, keep reading!....

The aim of our Wellness at Work campaign at Blythe Valley Park is to provide our park community with numerous ways to de-stress both at work and at home. One activity that many people find therapeutic is gardening (sometimes called horticultural therapy). Gardening and being outdoors/close to nature is not only beneficial for your physical health, but also for your mental health. Being outdoors and tending to plants can help you take your mind away from those pre-occupying thoughts about work and the like. Planting and watching things grow can give you a sense of achievement – which would make anyone feel happier! For some, just being closer to nature and away from the hustle and bustle of modern life, may create a more relaxed and peaceful easy feeling.

Thrive (one of Britain's leading charities in disability and gardening) is a charity that has been using therapeutic horticulture since 1978. Thrive's CEO, Kathryn Rossiter, says that

“ as well as the strong therapeutic value of gardening, it can also help people connect with others, reducing feelings of isolation. It makes us more active, gaining both physical and mental health benefits. ”

Studies carried out by the National Gardens Scheme (NGS) found that 39% of the people they questioned said that just being in a garden makes them feel healthier, and 79% believed that having access to a garden is essential for quality of life. More research looking into wellbeing, performance and the office found that levels of cortisol (a stress indicator) decrease significantly after 20 minutes in a more natural setting.

Here's how to sign up

At Blythe Valley, we would like you to experience the benefits of therapeutic horticulture – therefore we are running a workshop and would like you to help us plant some butterfly and bee friendly plants in the country park on **27th March 2018 from 12pm – 1pm**.

There are only **30 spaces available**, so sign up quickly by emailing **emily.coombs@improperties.co.uk** and the first 30 people will be guaranteed a space.

We have selected to plant a number of native flowering plant species rich in pollen and nectar including Betony, Cowslip, Devils-bit Scabious and Marsh Woundwort which offer a food source to a variety of bee and butterfly species. In addition, we will be planting Lady's Smock (Cuckooflower) and Common Sorrel which are the preferred larval food plants of the Orange-tip and Small Copper butterflies respectively.

If you're eager to do some more gardening, Marie Curie (who we supported last year) run volunteer gardening days at the local hospice in Solihull. They are always looking for people to get involved to help in the hospice's garden, so if you are interested, please contact **westmidlands.hospice@mariecurie.org.uk** They welcome any help they can get.

REFERENCES

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardening-events/the-best-benefit-of-gardening--improving-our-mental-health/>

<http://www.thrive.org.uk/what-is-social-and-therapeutic-horticulture.aspx>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/10862087/Horticultural-therapy-Gardening-makes-us-feel-renewed-inside.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3799530/>

