



## June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month

# Gardening is good for the body *and* mind

Bright floral blossoms and sun-ripened fruits and vegetables will soon be appearing in the summer heat. Close your eyes and imagine lush greenery, tropical-hued blooms, and veggies on a vine. Does the thought stimulate tranquility and happiness? More than beauty, gardening provides a myriad of health benefits for seniors – especially those suffering from any form of dementia.

There are many types of gardening a senior can be involved in. Community gardens, garden areas at assisted living facilities, or even a small garden of just a few pots

can provide important therapy. For those who are not as agile, simple activities like planting seeds is therapeutic. Gardening at any age is an excellent form of aerobic exercise. Time spent in the garden is enough to keep muscles from weakening and will improve your mobility.

Working in the garden requires dexterity and enhances motor functions. Allowing seniors with dementia to engage in gardening tasks can improve hand strength, flexibility, and balance. Specific jobs like digging, transferring,

and trimming or pinching back plants can help maintain their motor skills.

Activities that stimulate the brain can be just as important as physical activity. Gardening has been proven to promote brain health. Research shows that daily gardening may lower the risk of dementia by 36%. Spending time in a garden can help seniors maintain their motor skills, increase brain volume, and reduce risk of cognitive impairment.

Gardening stimulates memory. If you know someone with dementia who enjoyed gardening in their life prior to diagnosis, chances are engaging in gardening now may help stimulate memories for them. The emotional center of the brain allows us to recall memories that help appeal to our emotions. Gardening therapy can help them revisit those long-term memories. Seniors can benefit from sensory stimulation by either aromatherapy from certain herbs, visual stimulation, or simply by enjoying the soft wind and rustle of the leaves while being outdoors.

Gardening improves mood! It has been proven that gardening relieves stress by reducing cortisol levels in the brain. This makes it a great activity for everyone. Being around and growing plants stirs feelings of tranquility and gives us a feeling of renewal. Plants help us release happy hormones – namely serotonin, a chemical in our brain responsible for balancing moods. Being outdoors in the garden, under minimal sun exposure for safety, allows us to use the sun to increase vitamin D absorption, which in turn increases levels of serotonin.

Gardening can also help with feelings of social isolation, which is common in seniors

and especially those with any type of cognitive impairment. Gardening with a caregiver, grandchildren, or other seniors, can create a sense of commonality and belonging. Human interaction spurs chemical balances necessary for our mental well-being. Nothing feels more comforting than interacting with peers that are on the same journey.

No matter how small one's engagement in gardening, it provides numerous benefits to our body and mind. *"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."* – Alfred Austin



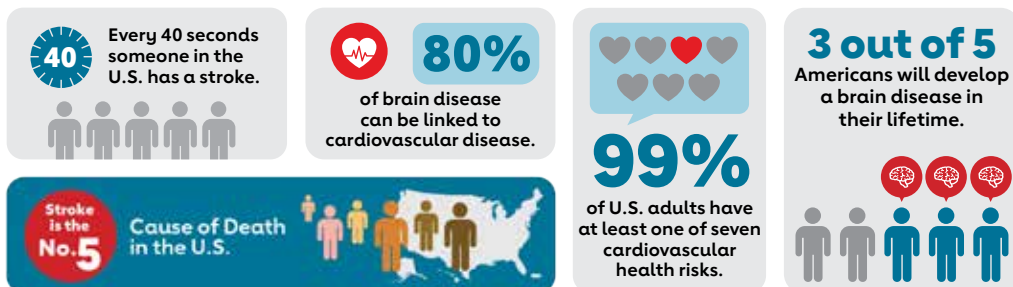
American  
Stroke  
Association.  
A division of the  
American Heart Association.

## MAY IS STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

# BRAIN HEALTH & HEALTHY AGING

As you age, a healthy body is key to a healthy brain and sharp mind.  
Stay healthy and active to help reduce your risk of stroke, heart disease,  
memory loss and difficulty with thinking and learning.

### BY THE NUMBERS



### YOUR LIFESTYLE CHOICES AFFECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

It's never too late to start making healthier choices:



#### Get enough sleep

Adults need 7–9 hours per night. Teenagers and children need more.



#### Move more, sit less

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise (or a combination) per week.



#### Get regular checkups

Schedule regular visits with your health care provider. Talk about how to control or manage your risk factors.



#### Eat healthy

Increase the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat. Reduce your intake of sodium, added sugar and saturated and trans fats.



#### Don't smoke or vape

If you currently smoke or vape, quit.

### HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

1

Talk with your health care provider

2

Call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit [heart.org/BrainHealth](https://heart.org/BrainHealth)



# Just for FUN

E W O N C H I I Y I A S U R X E N  
B I C Y C L E C P C R Y O Z M C F  
O M P W I Z J M N E F J A A P R R  
U M E I F M A T L I U I G M O E I  
T I H G A C O K X C C B S N P A S  
D N N J X O N P S M B K E H S M B  
O G W V F I I P X D R T R A I X E  
O O U E R R O C O O K O U T C N E  
R A R P T L F U W S S C V Q L H G  
S A S D F O L E M O N A D E E T A  
B A A P E Q R S U N S H I N E M N  
W O I F A I R G R O U N D P X B M  
R L W N F E K N B A S E B A L L X  
F B B M Y P M V T D G I S W O R V

*Find these warm-weather words hidden within the puzzle. Have fun!*

BAREFOOT  
BASEBALL  
BEACH  
BICYCLE  
CAMPING  
COOKOUT

FAIRGROUND  
FIREWORKS  
FISHING  
FLIP FLOPS  
FRIENDS  
FRISBEE

GAMES  
ICE CREAM  
LEMONADE  
OUTDOORS  
PICNIC  
POPSICLE

ROAD TRIP  
SPRINKLERS  
SUNSHINE  
SWIMMING  
VACATION  
WATER PARK

# Simply Delicious

## Salmon and Spud Salad

**Prep/Total Time:** 30 min; **Serves:** 4

### Ingredients

- 1 pound fingerling potatoes
- 1/2 pound fresh green beans
- 1/2 pound fresh asparagus
- 4 salmon fillets (6 ounces each)
- 1 tablespoon plus 1/3 cup red wine vinaigrette, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 4 cups fresh arugula or baby spinach
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh chives



### Instructions

1. Cut potatoes lengthwise in half. Trim and cut green beans and asparagus into 2-in. pieces. Place potatoes in a 6-qt. stockpot; add water to cover. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cook, uncovered, until tender, 10-15 minutes, adding green beans and asparagus during the last 4 minutes of cooking. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, brush salmon with 1 tablespoon vinaigrette; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place fish on oiled grill rack, skin side down. Grill, covered, over medium-high heat or broil 4 in. from heat until fish just begins to flake easily with a fork, 6-8 minutes.

3. In a large bowl, combine potato mixture, arugula, tomatoes and chives. Drizzle with remaining vinaigrette; toss to coat. Serve with salmon.

– courtesy of [tasteofhome.com](http://tasteofhome.com)

## Island Breezes Coffee Cake

**Prep Time:** 20 mins + chilling; **Prep Time:** 35 mins + cooling; **Serves:** 12

This pull-apart bread is perfect for an early summer brunch.

### Ingredients

- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sweetened shredded coconut, toasted
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) cook-and-serve coconut cream pudding mix
- 20 frozen bread dough dinner rolls
- 1 can (20 ounces) pineapple tidbits, drained
- 1 jar (3 ounces) macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed

### Instructions

1. In a small bowl, mix brown sugar, coconut and pudding mix. Place 10 rolls in a greased 10-in. fluted tube pan; layer with half of the sugar mixture, 1 cup pineapple tidbits, 1/3 cup macadamia nuts and 1/4 cup butter. Repeat layers. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
2. Remove pan from refrigerator about 1-3/4 hours before serving; let rise in a warm place until dough reaches top of pan, about 1 hour.
3. Preheat oven to 350°. Remove plastic wrap. Bake coffee cake 35-40 minutes or until golden brown. (Cover loosely with foil if top browns too quickly.) Cool 10 minutes before inverting onto a serving plate; serve warm.

– courtesy of [tasteofhome.com](http://tasteofhome.com)

