

Gardening Can Offer Physical and Mental Health Benefits

(StatePoint) It's no wonder gardening is growing in popularity, as it offers a wealth of physical and mental health benefits.

Indeed, gardening is on the upswing, as more than 2 million households were added to the ranks of Americans partaking in the pursuit, versus the prior year, according to the recently released 2013 National Gardening Survey from the National Gardening Association.

Here are some of the many ways gardening can potentially improve your health:

Harvest

One of those most important benefits of gardening is the harvest itself. Consider incorporating vegetables into your gardening repertoire. The food you grow will taste way better than the store bought variety. And since you can pick your tomatoes, carrots, squash and herbs when they are actually ripe, they will contain more nutrients as well.

Since you can regulate the way you grow your own vegetables, consider skipping the pesticides and opt for natural alternatives instead.

Exercise

If you hate the treadmill, don't fret. You can burn upwards of 150 calories by gardening for approximately 30 to 45 minutes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Regular physical activity can help you regulate weight and reduce your risk for such diseases as diabetes and heart disease.

Just be sure to take some safety precautions so you don't stress your back. New ergonomic tools can help support safer gardening. For example, the EZ Leaf Hauler, functions like a giant dust pan for leaves, so you can rake leaves directly into it before transport. With built-in handles, hauling is quick and easy on your back. Already using a tarp to drag your haul? Make it simple by clipping EZ Tarp Tugger handles to it. More



information can be found at www.EZlawnandgarden.com.

Go Green

Don't just take your own health into consideration -- think of the health of the planet, too. When hauling mulch, leaves, weeds and yard debris, skip the gas-guzzling leaf blower and opt for manual options.

Reduce the waste you create while gardening by packing more leaves into bags. Breaking them down first can help you bag them more efficiently and ultimately use fewer bags. An easy way to get the job done is with a tool like the EZ Leaf Stomper that packs about four times as many leaves per bag as traditional bagging.

And remember to compost your kitchen waste to reduce your landfill contribution and improve your soil.

Gardening is a great and healthy way to spend an afternoon, but remember that when you're out in the sun to take breaks often, hydrate frequently and wear sunscreen. Also, consider tools that can help you prevent overuse injuries.