

KENDAL<sup>®</sup> *at Oberlin*  
Together, transforming the experience of aging.<sup>®</sup>

# Cultivating Your *Garden For A Lifetime*

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# Benefits of Gardening for Older Adults



## Fresh Air

Many men and women look forward to spring because the season signals time to start digging in the dirt, enjoying the fresh air and planning a plot with yummy veggies and colorful flowers.



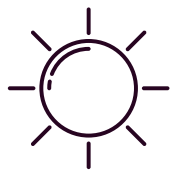
## Nuturing

These gardeners are taking care of the environment, but they're also engaging in an activity that nurtures their body and mind.



## Staying Active

First off, gardening is considered exercise by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends healthy older adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate to intense aerobic activity a week. Pulling weeds and planting seeds can make moving fun too.



## Vitamin D

Fresh air and sunshine mean exposure to Vitamin D, which strengthens bones and the immune system and lowers the risk for osteoporosis. (Don't forget the sunscreen.)



## Rest

According to [Healthline](#), studies have found that the physical exertion of working in a garden may help offset age-related weight gain and promote a solid seven hours of sleep at night.



## Mental Health

Gardening could lower the risk of dementia by at least one-third, [according to a 2006 study](#) that tracked more than 2,800 people over the age of 60 for 16 years. The study concluded that physical activity, particularly gardening, could reduce memory loss in future years.



No surprise that being outdoors and engaged in an invigorating activity can also reduce stress and anxiety and improve one's mood and self-esteem. ("Here, have a tomato I grew in my garden!")

Gardening also helps you continue to learn and grow. "I love making mistakes because I look at them as a chance to learn something new," says [Joe Lamp'l](#), host of the popular PBS show [Growing a Greener World](#). "Through those mishaps, you can understand what happened and why, and you can be empowered to relate that learning to new things."

And good news: You'll get these health benefits with a smaller garden too!

*"We might think we are nurturing our garden, but of course it's our garden that is really nurturing us."  
- Jenny Uglow*



# How to Downsize a Garden, Without Downsizing the Joy

If you moved to a smaller home, condo or retirement community, or are considering such a move, you'll probably have to downsize your garden too.

A smaller garden comes with lots of pluses.

“It’s a lot easier to tend to a smaller garden, and there’s less weeding for sure,” says Nick Long, a Master Gardener who moved to Kendal at Oberlin from a house in Louisiana last year. You’ll have more free time and less financial investment, but not necessarily less enjoyment.

According to the blogger at [Age Old Nutrients](#):

*“By downsizing the garden and minimizing the amount of work I needed to do, I began to experience the same excitement and joy that had been there in my first few seasons. I no longer felt the stress and anxiety that had grown from years of unreasonable garden expansion. It was so refreshing to be able to enjoy working in my garden again sincerely, and I am glad to have made the choice to limit its size drastically. I’ve also begun to notice that, when done properly, a smaller garden can be just as appealing both visually and emotionally as any bigger garden I’ve grown.”*

