

## De-Stress with Gardening

Gardening is one of my favorite ways to unwind. It helps me be present in nature and is a great way to have fun with others as well. I wasn't born with a green thumb and have had some trouble growing plants successfully in the past. But after learning some gardening basics, a few simple tips and gaining some experience, I've successfully grown many vegetables, berries, herbs, and citrus fruits, which give our meals an extra special and healthy touch.

### Benefits of Gardening:

- 1) Gives you a reason to put off work or housework and take a few deep breaths of refreshing outside air!
- 2) Makes your body strong! I get to use muscles I don't ordinarily use. When weeding, I'm squatting; when digging or carrying soil, I'm using ALL my muscle groups.
- 3) Enables you to spend time alone or with your partner, friend or children. Even when others don't want to help with the garden, they'll come out and chat over some cold ice tea. Or sometimes after gardening, you can relax outside over lunch, tired and admiring the beauty of hard work!
- 4) Provides a great opportunity for you to spend time with others who love to dig in the dirt and get dirty! It is great fun, but it is also good for the immune system. Plus, it's great to watch the fruits of our labor grow.
- 5) It's rewarding to grow it, pick it and eat it! Fresh produce right out of the garden tastes amazingly good, really reinforcing the old adage that "fresh is best!" Plus it's organic and perfectly safe. I know exactly what went on the plants, who picked it and what was involved in the growing process.
- 6) It's a way for you, your family, and friends to try new foods, like purple kale or Swiss chard.