



COLORADO LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Gardening Helps Your Brain

A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them.

~Liberty Hyde Bailey

In Colorado, springtime and early summer is the perfect time to get your hands in the dirt and garden! Even though law school and externships keep you busy this time of year, remember that engaging in hobbies such as gardening and exercise enhance the academic and professional skillsets we need to succeed in these arenas. Research shows that gardening has many unknown benefits, including stress-relief and improving self-esteem. Research also shows that soil contains bacteria that are natural antidepressants and improve immune functions to keep you healthy. Hand strength and dexterity are increased with gardening, and it is a great form of exercise. Playing in the dirt also gets you outside to enjoy the sun. It's important to be cautious with sun exposure, but don't forget that it is also important to get some rays in the morning and in the evening. Safe sun exposure gives us our daily vitamin D, which decreases the chance of heart disease, improves sleep, and gives us energy. The brain is also improved with gardening. Cognitive functions such as sensory awareness, learning, and problem solving are needed while gardening, and studies show that they also reduce the risk of developing dementia.

If you have a garden, get in the dirt this week. If you don't have a yard, you can pot herbs for the kitchen, pot plants for your deck, or join a community garden. You could also get some cut flowers for home or office. When you take a run or walk around the neighborhood, stop to smell the new blossoms. Follow the links below to read more about the benefits of being in the garden:

<http://agverra.com/blog/garden-soil-happy-smart/>

<http://eartheasy.com/blog/2014/09/6-unexpected-health-benefits-of-gardening/>

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/07/08/why.gardening.good/>

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July 2015

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