

A Sensory Garden is one that invites visitors to use all their senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. In settings such as an Extended Care Facility, like Edgewater Haven, raised beds that are chair height can provide easy access to everyone despite limitations. Residents enjoy picking blueberries and strawberries for a nice treat. Many residents sit in the garden with family or caregivers, which can prompt memories and conversation about gardening with a beloved parent or grandparent.

You can also create a ground level Sensory Garden geared for children that can be an introduction to colors, shapes, fragrances, and textures. Sounds from bubbling water, birds, insects, and plants moving in the wind create an interesting natural soundtrack for young learners.

For everyone, it can be a soothing respite from today's hectic world.

In this garden, look for these elements to stimulate your senses.

Taste:

Blueberries and **strawberries**.
Yum. (Right)

Herbs like peppermint, oregano, dill, and chives. Take a leaf and put on your tongue. Many flowers are edible like **Nasturtiums** (below), **Pansies**, and **Lavender**.





Sight

Assorted annuals & perennials (left) with blooms of every color of the rainbow; **Coleus** with colorful multicolor leaves; bright chartreuse green trailing leaves of **Sweet Potato vine**, colorful flowers of **Cosmos**, **Cone flowers** (Echinacea), varied leaves of shrubs and **Hostas** and Interesting spiral shapes of **Ornamental kale** (below)



Perennials such as **Russian Sage** with large, airy, silvery leaves and lavender flowers (below); **Love Lies Bleeding (Amaranthus)** with long, dramatic red plumes; Cheerful yellow, daisy-like **Black Eyed Susans (Rudbeckia)** (left)



Smell

Herbs: Chocolate Mint, Lemon Thyme, Dill and lavender (below right). Crush a leaf between your fingers and take a whiff.

Flowers: Heliotrope, Peonies, and Lilies (below). The “Popcorn Plant”(right), a tropical shrub grown as an annual here, is fast growing, producing large, fragrant yellow flowers by mid summer. It is popular with residents who look for it every year, Close your eyes, rub the leaves together, and smell rich, buttery popcorn!

Trees: Japanese Lilac



Sound

Listen to the wind blowing through the trees and tall grasses, or making the wind chimes ring.



Pollinators, like different kinds of bees and dragon flies, buzz around the colorful flowers, like **Eupatorium (Joe Pye Weed)** (above with lilies), and **Russian Sage** (above right)





Touch

Lamb's Ear: soft and fuzzy, silvery leaves (above); **cactus:** pokey with sharp spikes; soft **grass** seed heads; and **Amaranthus (Love Lies Bleeding)** with its long, dramatic, soft, red plumes (below).





Monarchs LOVE Mexican sunflowers!



Blackberry Lily

