

The Root of Happiness: THE WORLD OF GARDENING



HISTORY

Vegetable gardening has a long history dating back to ancient times, where **gardens were tended by religious figures to provide food for their communities.** Monks in Europe during the Middle Ages were known for their gardens of vegetables and medicinal herbs.^[1] Gardens in the Renaissance era were designed in elaborate patterns and were seen as a status symbol to showcase wealth and power.^[2]

Indigenous communities across Turtle Island developed complex agricultural systems over thousands of years, including the “**Three Sisters**” method in which corn, beans, and squash were grown together, as well as other sustainable techniques that promoted soil health and biodiversity. **Gardening played a crucial role in the diets and cultures of indigenous communities,** and many varieties of crops were developed over time to suit different growing conditions and uses. The arrival of **European colonizers in the 15th century disrupted traditional gardening practices,** leading to the loss of many native crops, the displacement of native plant species, and soil degradation.^[3,4]

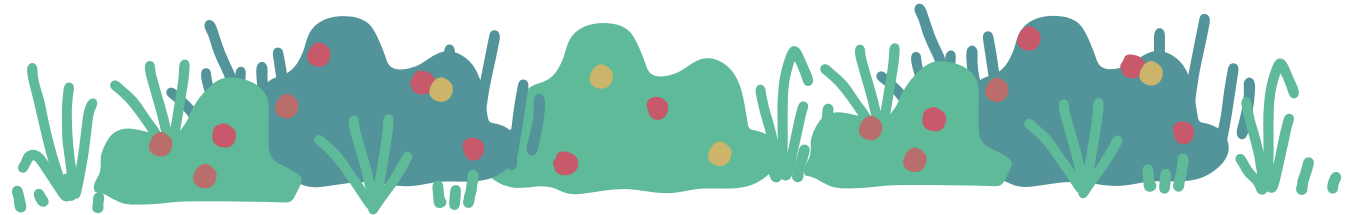
In the 19th and 20th centuries, vegetable gardening became more popular in suburban and urban areas as cities grew and space became scarce. Many people began growing their own vegetables to supplement their diets, and community gardens were established to provide a shared space for gardening. **During World War II, vegetable gardening played a crucial role in the war effort, as victory gardens were encouraged to help supplement the food supply.**^[5]

Today, **vegetable gardening continues to be a popular pastime for people around the world,** thanks to advances in technology and agricultural practices.

The modern words "garden" and "yard" are descendants of the Old English "geard", which denotes a fence or enclosure.^[6]

Garden Gossip

BENEFITS OF GARDENING

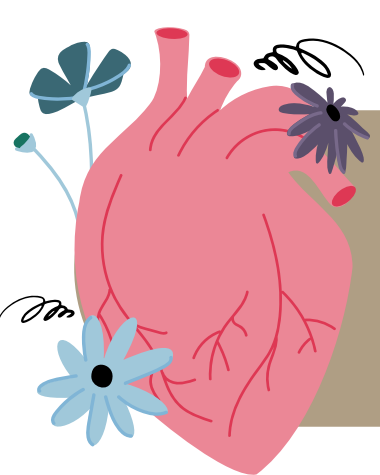


Physical Health

Gardening can be a **moderate intensity exercise,** which can **improve cardiovascular health.**

Mental Health

Spending time in a garden can have a **positive impact on mental health, reduce stress and improve overall well-being.**



Individuals who gardened regularly had a significantly lower risk of heart attack and stroke than those who didn't garden.^[7]



Gardening can reduce cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress.^[10]



Gardening can improve self-esteem and mood.^[11]



Activities such as digging, raking, and planting require the use of multiple muscle groups and can help build overall strength and flexibility.^[8]



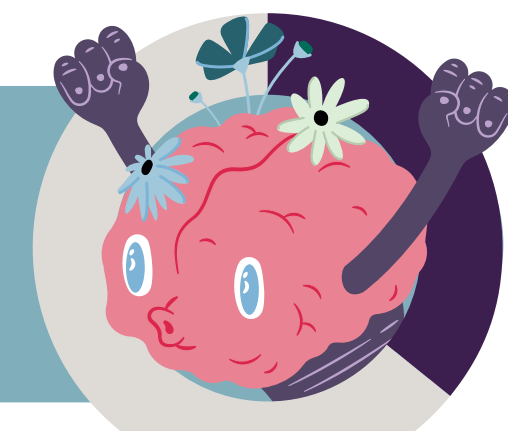
Gardening can improve cognitive function, memory and attention span in older adults.^[12-14]



A study of ~4,000 individuals found that regular gardening can increase life expectancy by up to 30% for those aged 60 plus.^[9]

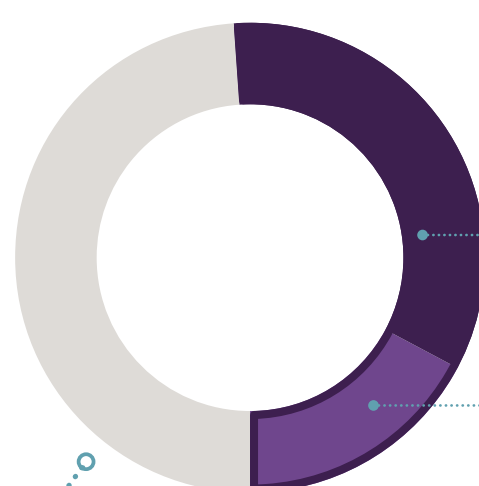


Gardening can reduce the risk of developing dementia by 36%.^[15]



GARDENING TRENDS

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the trend towards home gardening and horticulture. More people are growing fruits and vegetables, and sales of nursery products and potted plants have increased. Consumers are spending more money on greenhouse flowers and plants, indicating a shift towards sustainability and self-sufficiency. Private companies are also investing more money towards research and production of seeds. This trend is likely to continue as people seek to connect with nature and live more sustainable.



A 2020 survey found that **51% of people nationwide** grew fruits or vegetables at home. Out of those, **17.4%** started growing at home during the pandemic.^[16]



Overall sales in nursery products increased to **\$747.5 million in 2021 vs. 2020.**^[17]



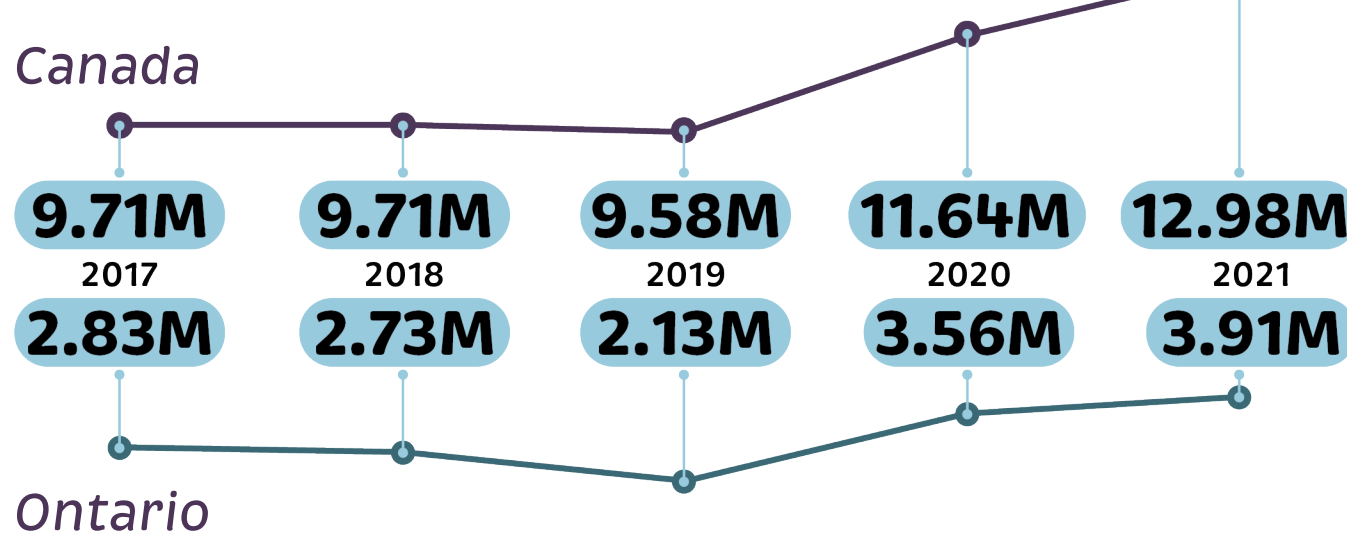
Canadians spent **\$1.8 billion** more on greenhouse flowers/plants in **2021 vs. 2020.**^[18]



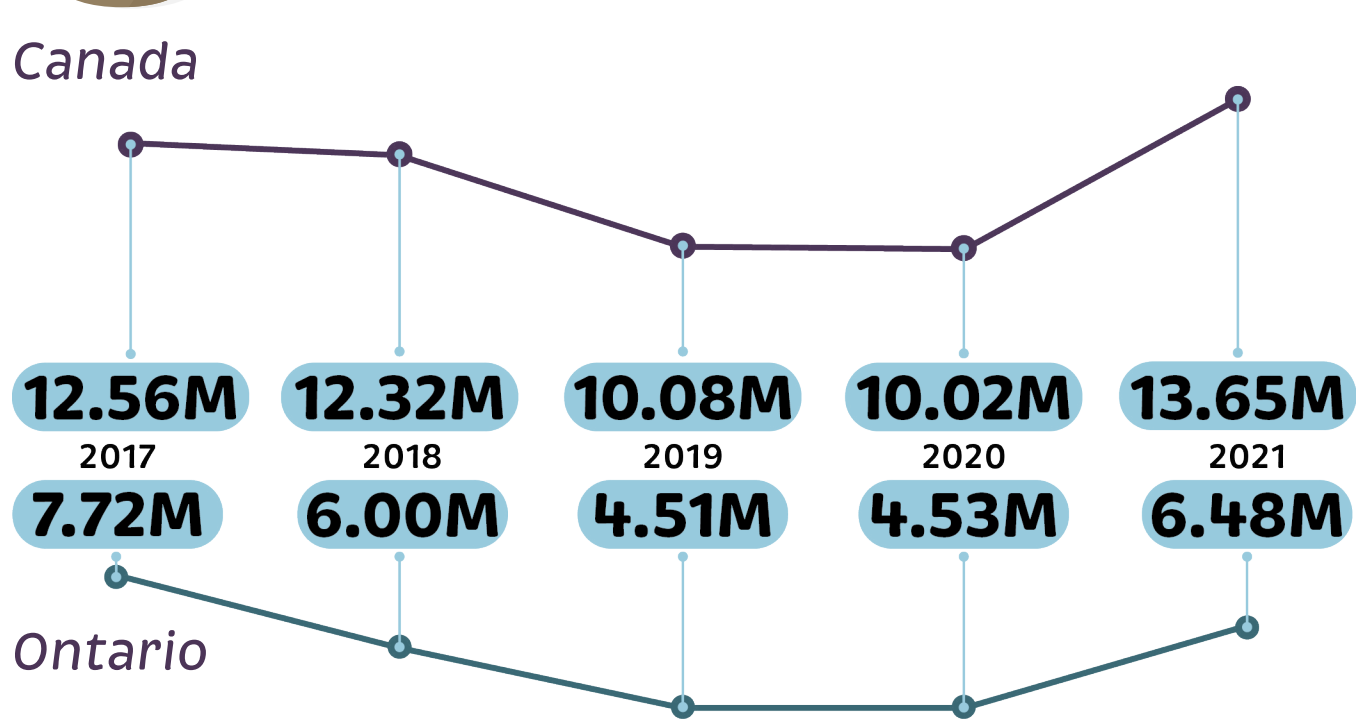
Potted plants represented **\$995.2 million** of sales (**54.7%**) in **2021 vs. 2020.**^[18]



Production of Potted Vegetables from in Canada vs. Ontario [19-20]



Production of Potted Herbs from Greenhouses in Canada vs. Ontario [19-20]



Seedy Business

The push for better quality seeds.

In **2017,** private companies invested almost **\$171 million** in plant breeding, research and variety development in Canada. That is almost **6%** of their combined domestic sales and it represents an increase of more than **56%** from **2012.** The forecast is that private investment will increase by another **\$8 million** by **2022.**^[21]



In 2005, a Judean date palm seed about 2,000 years old, recovered from Masada in Israel, was successfully germinated, making it the oldest known seed to grow into a viable plant.^[22]

Garden Gossip

OPPORTUNITY

Sudbury boasts **35 community gardens,** spread across **15 areas in Greater Sudbury,** making it easily accessible to residents from Walden to Wahnapiatae First Nations, and many other communities in between.^[23]

Furthermore, gardening can be an affordable and accessible hobby that can be done at home. With the availability of gardening supplies online through platforms such as Amazon and at dollar stores, the cost of getting started is super low.

Plant at home for less than \$5*

	Pot (6" x 6")	\$1.50
	Soil (2.7L)	\$1.50
	Trowel	\$1.50
	Seeds	\$0.38 (or 4/\$1.50)
6" x 6" pot = 2.8L of soil [24]		
Items from Dollar Tree**		
		Total: \$4.88*
		* before tax

ACCESSIBILITY

Gardening can be made accessible for those with disabilities by **modifying the garden design and tools used.** Raised garden beds can assist those with mobility impairments, while **adaptive tools such as long-handled trowels, pruners, and watering cans** can help those with limited dexterity or strength. **Sensory gardens with textured plants, fragrant herbs, and colorful flowers**



can be enjoyed by those with visual or sensory impairments. **Gardening is a flexible activity** that can be modified to suit an individual's abilities and needs, making it inclusive for all.^[25]

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Ontario's agriculture industry employs **67,400** people, accounting for **0.9%** of the province's workforce. Of this, **12.6% (8,500 employees)** are in the nursery and greenhouse sector, which has an aging workforce with **36% over 55.** Job growth in the sector is **forecasted to be moderate over 2022-2024**^[26], and

the industry offers a range of employment opportunities in production, sales, marketing, R&D, and management. The **average wage** for a greenhouse/nursery worker in **2023 is \$15.83.**^[27]

Thank you for following this infographic on gardening. A list of sources for this infographic can be found on the [Root of Happiness, The World of Gardening Source Page](#) (Google Document).