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Dementia Therapeutic Garden Audit Tool

Supporting people in their garden environment



**ALZHEIMER'S RESTRICTS
AUSTRALIA ENABLES**



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The Dementia Therapeutic Garden Audit Tool is adapted from the Alzheimer's Garden Audit Tool (AGAT) developed by Professor Clare Cooper Marcus in 2007.
Cooper Marcus, Clare. 2007. "Alzheimer's Garden Audit Tool." *Journal of Housing for the Elderly* 21 (1-2): 179-191

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Dementia Therapeutic Garden Audit Tool

www.enablingenvironments.com.au

Date _____

Name of Auditor _____

Name of Garden/Facility _____

Address _____

Contact person _____

Scoring System

0 = Feature not present (e.g.no entry patio)
Quality missing, not familiar or home like

1 = Poor – fair

2 = Moderately good, could be improved

3 = Very good – Successful

NA = Not applicable

Score the garden according to each of the following issues and add notes as appropriate

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

ACCESSIBILITY

ORIENTATION

SUSTAINABILITY

SOCIALISATION

MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY

REMINISCENCE

SENSORY STIMULATION

SAFETY

ACCESSIBILITY - ORIENTATION - HELPFUL STIMULATION – SOCIALISATION - SAFETY

LOCATION AND ENTRY TO GARDEN

SCORE

1. Visibly accessible from inside the building so people can see the garden when going about their daily activities inside.

2. Door to the garden is easy to see and locate. Door contrasts easily against the wall, and the pathway to the door is clear of obstacles.

3. The door/doors into the garden are easy to operate. *(Light weight and easy to pull / push to allow time for people with walking frames / wheelchairs to go through)*

4. Door handles are contrasting colour to the door

5. The door is unlocked each day, to allow people to go outside to the garden.

<http://www.enablingenvironments.com.au/GardensandNature>

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6. The threshold of the entry door is flat and smooth.

7. Shaded seating patio area just outside the door, for people who want to go outside but cannot venture further.

8. Attractive garden view from this exit/entry patio to the garden as this space may get used more than the garden.

9. Exit/entry patio is large enough to accommodate 4-6 people in wheelchairs, has a table and chairs for 3-4 people all seated with a clear view to garden area, with easy access to entry/exit door.

10. In areas with significant fly/mosquito problems, entry patio is screened and lit at night.

11. Entry patio receives late afternoon sunshine, avoiding long shadows that may increase agitation at this time of day.

12. Entry patio is an area people can enjoy a semi outdoor experience all year round, having bright natural light beneficial to health.

13. **Entry patio** - one point for each.

Birds in cage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bird bath	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Statue	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colourful plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	Art work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Butterfly / bird attracting plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other feature:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

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ORIENTATION – SAFETY: PROVIDE FOR SAFE WALKING & UNOBTRUSIVELY REDUCE RISKS LAYOUT AND PATHWAYS

14. Entry patio is designed as a landmark, so that those using the garden can easily see where they have to return, to get back indoors.

15. Staff can view the whole garden area from inside the building when going about daily activities.

100% view (score 3)

50% (score 2)

25% (score 1)

less than 25% (score 0)

16. Signage in and around the garden clearly indicates users to entries and key locations. (e.g.toilet,)

17. The pathway is a simple looped continuous well defined pathway. It has no “dead ends” or confusing choices wether to turn right or left to return home.

18. The pathway guides people past points of interest, linking small and large garden areas.

19. The pathway has destination points such as: a gazebo, shaded seating areas, large shade tree (with seating underneath) providing opportunities for social interaction.

20. The pathway is level and well maintained; free of mould, broken pavers, loose gravel and obstacles such as overhanging tree branches.

21. The path surface is non-reflective and well defined: a consistent colour, with contrasting edging colour to support way finding and define the edge from paving to garden.

22. The main pathways are a minimum of 1.8m wide to allow for wheelchairs to pass. Smaller pathways are 1.2 - 1.5m wide allowing for individual journeys.

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23. Appropriate pathway surface for wheelchairs, walkers, shuffling feet etc., brushed concrete or asphalt provide appropriate traction.

24. Hand rails placed intermittently along the pathway for people to rest against, or balance themselves as they move through the garden.

Comments: _____

SUPPORT MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY

25. There are raised garden beds of different heights for easy access (wheelchairs, walkers, and seating) allowing people to grow vegetables, herbs and/or flowers.

26. There is easy access to garden tools such as hand trowels, watering can (water tap close by clearly identified) and garden broom to sweep leaves. *(If shed is not available)* Supply tools that are designed for limited strength and mobility.

27. Seating is available at garden beds for people to sit and enjoy gardening activities without having to stand.

28. A bird aviary or fish pond is available for people to interact with daily.

Comments: _____

THE GARDEN SHED

29. The garden shed is easily accessible for people – sun hats, garden tools, brooms and rake are within easy reach. Storage containers have labels, or are see through for easy identification. *There are NO chemicals/paint / pesticides or electrical items stored here – the maintenance shed is separate.

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30. A table is next to the shed with ample shade for seating.

31. The shed for maintenance staff is subtly disguised with planting.
This maintenance shed is locked at all times.

Comments: _____

SEATING: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO BE ALONE OR WITH OTHERS – SOCIALISATION

32. There are shady areas to relax in, to sit or read a book.

33. Provide seating options for a person to sit alone, as a couple, or with others.

34. Sheltered, all year round outdoor entertaining area for celebrations, family visits and outdoor group activities.

35. Appropriate seating design – back and arms for ease of pushing up from a sitting position.

36. Comfort of seating: timber, hard plastic fabric preferable, seat cushions for added comfort.

37. Choice of seating in sunshine / shade throughout most of the year.

38. Seating at regular and frequent intervals along main pathway, every 15ft or 4.57m is necessary for people who are quite frail, and to encourage people who walk excessively to sit quietly and take a rest.

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39. When seated, the view is interesting and attractive. Views to a bird feeder or plants that attract birds, colourful flower beds, varied plant shapes colours and textures, sculpture, watching people walk by to the shops / local school children playing.

40. Some moveable seating available, easy to move but sturdy and stable enough to prevent tipping.

Comments: _____

See Sensory by Seasons guide to planting
<http://www.enablingenvironments.com.au/GardensandNature/SensorybySeasons.aspx>

REMINISCENCE - SENSORY: SMELL, TOUCH, SOUND, TASTE, VISION – SAFETY SENSORY STIMULATION

41. Provision of features that evoke memories for people: These might include garden shed, vegetable garden, wheelbarrows, barbeque, pottery, bicycle or piece of farm*equipment. (**Consider safety measures - fix pieces to the ground*)

42. Small scale design changes to that a person walking slowly would have a variety of visual experiences e.g. varied plants, open / sunny / shaded / waking under trellis / pergola.

43. Avoidance of structures (e.g. trellis / pergola) that cast slatted shadows which may be interpreted as depth changes by people with perception problems.

44. Opportunity to sit, listen and observe wildlife: plants that attract birds, butterflies, a bird feeder and bird bath.

45. Opportunity to sit, listen to watch and touch interesting water features, which also act as orientation points around the garden.

46. Opportunity to see and touch different textured plants such as grasses, and trees with soft leafy branches that rustle in the wind.

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47. Bright colourful contrasting seasonal flowers and succulents arranged and planted at different heights give the garden colour all year round.

48. Aromatic plants such as jasmine, frangipani, lavender, roses; these plants often promote conversation and reminiscence.

49. Edible plants: lemon / orange fruit trees, herbs such as mint parsley, basil, a vegetable patch with carrots, lettuce and tomato's. (At a height that is easy to access e.g. raised garden bed)

50. Colourful hanging baskets/ interesting mosaics on blank large wall areas, bright coloured pots and planters.

51. The garden area has lighting so the area can be accessed for walking and sitting on warm evenings, or viewed from inside when dark.

52. All plants are non toxic, none have thorns or spikes. (May cause skin tears.)

Comments: _____

<http://www.enablingenvironments.com.au/GardensandNature>

SUSTAINABILITY

53. Plants are predominantly low maintenance except in interactive garden beds, and suitable for the geographical placement of the garden in Australia.
E.g. drought tolerant and water wise in W.A.

54. A gardening group of residents, volunteers or a regular gardener maintains the garden area.

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55. A rainwater tank is available for use in the garden, easily accessible with watering can close by.

56. Quality of plants - overall the plants look healthy

57. Litter receptacles and ash trays* available. (In *appropriate areas*)

58. Signage leading to outside toilets.

59. Fruit trees, or trees that drop leaves are well pruned and maintained, are set back from pathways avoiding walk areas becoming a slip hazard

Comments: _____

PLANTING

60. Garden receives at least half a day of full sunshine.

61. Good diversity of plants selected for seasonal interest, variety, shade qualities, screening and plants that attract the wildlife.

62. Flat lawn area large enough for an informal grouping of movable chairs, ball games or for people to sit or lie on.

63. Blue sky vista (clear overall view to sky)

Comments: _____

GENERAL

<http://www.enablingenvironments.com.au/GardensandNature>

64. Gate into garden for maintenance staff and/or serving as an emergency exit is subtly disguised with planting, or is a hidden panel in the fence line.

65. Outdoor space is free from unpleasant sounds such as loading dock, loud air conditioners etc.

66. Outdoor space has views of interest for people to sit and watch from the garden such as local school, people walking by to local shops.

67. Building edge encloses the garden as much as possible, so the degree to which the garden has to be fenced is minimised.

68. Degree of privacy from resident rooms/windows looking out onto the garden space.

69. Opportunity for staff to sit in a private space away from their work, out of sight of residents to enjoy a break.

70. Boundary of space provides enclosure of tree and tall shrubs screening view of fences and forming a natural framework to the garden.

71. Provision of outdoor smoking area in this garden or elsewhere.

72. Area for visiting children to play.

Comments: _____

Add up the total number of 0 – 1, total number of 2's, and total number of 3's

Mostly 1-0

Poor environment

Mostly 2's

Room for improvement

Mostly 3's

A successful garden that is supportive

IDENTIFIED HAZARDS: TICK BOX Trip hazards / falls / skin tears /

1. Lawn / garden bed sprinklers are set above ground level.

2. Plants with thorns / spikes.

6. Pathway blocked

3. Garden furniture in need of repair.

7. Uneven paving

4. Hose / garden tools left out

8. Steep paths

5. Entry/exit blocked

9. Sunken pavers

Highlight identified hazards for immediate attention

List the audit question numbers that need most attention

Comments:

The garden's success is very much dependent upon the staffs understanding of the therapeutic value and design of the area. By recognising the different elements and their functions and use, staff will feel more empowered to develop activities that encourage the use of the garden.

Staff comments:

How many residents currently use the garden area each day?

Is the garden area used on a regular basis for lunches/ reminiscence / gardening groups / other planned activities?

Meals Reminiscence Gardening groups Other activities

Do family and friends of residents use the garden when visiting?

Do staff enjoy going into the garden with residents? If not, why not?

What changes / additions would the staff like to see to encourage people to go outside?

Other comments:

This tool is in a pilot stage and we would appreciate your feedback on its usability and usefulness. Please help us further develop this tool by completing our short survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MLSPMRN>