

# ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA WA

## DEMENTIA THERAPEUTIC GARDEN AUDIT TOOL

Date

Name of auditor

Name of day centre/nursing home

Address

### 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 where appropriate.

Contact person

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### KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Accessibility
- Orientation
- Meaningful Activity
- Socialisation
- Sustainability
- Reminiscence
- Sensory Stimulation
- Safety

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### LOCATION AND ENTRY TO GARDEN

Accessibility • Orientation • Sensory Stimulation • Socialisation • Safety

Score

1. Visibly accessible from inside the building so people can see the garden when going about their daily activities inside.
2. The door/s to the garden is easy to see and locate. The door contrasts easily against the wall and the pathway to the door is clear of obstacles.
3. The door/s 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.

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5. The door/s is unlocked each day to allow people to go outside to the garden.
6. The threshold of the entry door is flat and smooth.
7. There is a shaded seating patio area just outside the door for people who want to go outside but cannot venture further.
8. There is an attractive garden view from this exit/entry patio to the garden as this space may get used more than the garden.
9. The exit/entry patio is large enough to accommodate 4-6 people in wheelchairs with a table and chairs to suit 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, the entry patio is screened and lit at night.
11. The entry patio receives late afternoon sunshine, avoiding long shadows that may increase agitation at this time of day.
12. The 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

Bird bath

Water feature

Statue

Colourful plants

Art work

Butterfly/bird  
attracting plants

Other

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Comments:

## ORIENTATION - SAFETY: PROVIDE FOR SAFE WALKING & UNOBTUSIVELY REDUCE RISKS - LAYOUT AND PATHWAYS

14. The entry patio is designed as a landmark so that those using the garden can easily see where they have to navigate to return to the indoor area.
15. Staff can view the whole garden area from inside the building when going about daily activities.

100% (score 3)

50% (score 2)

25% view (score 1)

< 25% (score 0)

16. Signage in and around the garden clearly indicates users to entry points 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 whether to turn right or left to return where they started.
18. The pathway guides people past points of interest linking to small and large garden areas.
19. The pathway has destination points such as: a gazebo, shaded seating areas, large shaded tree (with seating underneath), providing opportunities for social interaction.

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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, consistent in colour with a contrasting border 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.
23. There is an appropriate pathway surface for wheelchairs, walkers, shuffling feet etc. Brushed concrete or asphalt provide appropriate traction.
24. Hand rails are placed intermittently along the pathway for people 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 nearby which is clearly identified) and garden broom to sweep leaves (if shed is not available). Tools are available for those with limited strength and mobility.

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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.
30. A table is positioned 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.**

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## SEATING: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO BE ALONE OR WITH OTHERS - SOCIALISATION

32. There are shady areas to relax, sit or read a book.
33. There are 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 – backrest and armrest for ease when transferring from sitting to standing position.
36. Comfortable seating: timber or hard plastic material preferable. Seat cushions available for additional comfort.
37. Choice of seating available in the sun/shade throughout most of the year.
38. Seating at frequent intervals along main pathway, every 15ft or 4.57m to provide an opportunity for people to sit quietly and rest when walking along the path.
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 walking by or children playing from the local school.
40. There is some portable seating available which is easy to move but sturdy and stable to prevent trip hazard.

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## SENSORY STIMULATION

Reminiscence • Sensory: Smell • Touch • Sound • Taste • Vision - Safety

41. Provision of features that evoke memories for people: These might include garden shed, vegetable garden, wheelbarrows, barbeque, pottery, bicycle or pieces of farm equipment \*. (*\*Consider safety measures - fix pieces to the ground*)
42. Small scale design changes so that a person walking slowly would have a variety of visual experiences e.g. varied plants, open/sunny/shaded/walking 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 issues.
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.
47. Bright colourful contrasting seasonal flowers and succulents arranged and planted at different heights providing a colourful 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 tomatoes (positioned 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 adequate 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, without thorns or spikes (these may cause skin tears).

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Comments:

## **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 maintaining the garden area.
55. A rainwater tank is available for use in the garden, easily accessible with watering can near by.
56. Quality of plants - overall the plants look healthy.
57. Litter receptacles and ash trays available (in appropriate areas)The shed for maintenance staff is subtly disguised with planting.
58. Signage leading to outside toilets.

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

Comments:

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

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 informal grouping of portable chairs, ball games or for people to sit or lie on.

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

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- 64. Gate into garden for maintenance staff and/or serving as an emergency exit is subtly disguised with planting or has a hidden panel in the fence.
- 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. Perimeter of the building surrounds the garden as much as possible, so the degree to which the garden has to be fenced is minimised.
- 68. There is a 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. Trees and tall shrubs act as a screen to the boundary fence and form a natural framework to the garden.
- 71. Provision of outdoor smoking area in the garden or elsewhere.
- 72. An area for visiting children to play.

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

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**IDENTIFIED HAZARDS - TRIP HAZARDS/FALLS/SKIN TEARS**

- 1. Lawn/garden bed sprinklers are set above ground level
- 2. Plants with thorns/spikes
- 3. Garden furniture in need of repair
- 4. Hose/garden tools left out
- 5. Entry/exit blocked
- 6. Pathway blocked
- 7. Uneven paving
- 8. Steep paths
- 9. Sunken pavers

**Highlight indentified hazards for immediate attention**

List the audit question numbers than need most attention.

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The garden's success is very much dependent upon 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?

What is the garden used for on a regular basis?

**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?

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