

DOVIA Mississippi Presents Ideas for How Gardeners Can Help

There's something special about plants! A study at Washington State University by Dr. Virginia Lohr, a WSU professor of horticulture, and Dr. Caroline Pearson-Mims, a research technologist, indicates that live indoor plants may increase productivity and reduce stress. Another study by these two researchers has shown that the presence of plants can help people tolerate short-term pain.

At the University of Delaware, Dr. Roger Ulrich, a professor of architecture, has studied how hospital surroundings influence patients recovering from surgery. Patients who had a view of trees from their hospital room used fewer pain-relieving drugs than patients whose view was a brick wall.

So, whether you tend indoor house plants or enjoy working outdoors in the garden, use your green thumb to pass along to others the comforting presence of living plants. Most of these ideas can be implemented either by one person or by a group of greenery-lovers who would like to undertake a Random Acts of Kindness project together.

- Create or donate a floral arrangement to a senior center, nursing home, police station, hospital, shut-ins, etc.
- Tend a garden at a school or faith organization.
- Bring fresh produce or flowers to neighbors, coworkers, or homeless shelters.
- Put a flower with a RAK note on a neighbor's porch.
- Organize a flower-planting party in a nearby park, school, or faith organization.
- Donate individual flowers for food trays delivered to the homebound.
- Help a neighbor weed his/her garden.
- Set aside a portion of your garden for a neighbor child to tend, and work in the garden together, offering ideas and expertise as you go. Or simply help the child start a vegetable plant, teach the child how to tend it, and allow him or her to take the produce home.
- Assemble and deliver a basket of vegetables or fruit and a few flowers for a homebound person.
- Grow herbs and offer them to your neighbors for recipes that require fresh herbs.
- With your garden's yield, bake some zucchini bread and share it with neighbors or coworkers.
- Nurture small flowering plants in pots until they are in full bloom. Then deliver them to shut-ins or recent surgery patients.
- If you have plants that propagate easily, offer cuttings to neighbors and their children to take home and root.
- Select some people in your life who you feel need a special lift, and send them flowers or a houseplant.

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- Why do you love to garden? Share your gardening inspiration, knowledge, stories, and favorite sources for seeds and plants with interested groups of adults and children.

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