

YOUR GARDEN

Plant A Healing Garden

(NAPSA)—Here's an idea that's growing in popularity: Plant a garden to help you or someone you care about heal physically, spiritually or emotionally.

For most of history, gardens have had a strong relationship to health and healing. Today, people use healing gardens to restore the body, spirit and mind. Gardens create a sense of calm, balance, hope and inspiration, which greatly improve the recovery process. A healing garden is an opportunity to observe and be a part of the life cycle, giving a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Gardens offer fresh air, exercise and sunlight, important for reducing stress, anxiety and depression.

That's why hospitals, nursing homes, hospices and cancer-support centers across the nation use healing gardens for their patients. In fact, doctors at the Jupiter Medical Center in Florida discovered that patients who had a view of the healing garden from their rooms took less pain medication and had shorter hospital stays than those without such a view.

Healing gardens are often used to help women in their battles against breast cancer. That's important, since the National Cancer Institute estimates that one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point during her lifetime.

When planting a home healing garden, consider the following to maximize its healing qualities:

• **Overall layout:** Include places to sit and reflect, pray, meditate or relax, such as a wooden swing. Picture what calms or inspires you and include these elements and items. A small pond, garden art, wind chimes, even interesting rocks might add to your garden's tranquility. Enclose



You can use a healing garden to help restore the body, spirit and mind with pretty pink plants such as the Invincibelle Spirit Hydrangea.

it with shrubs or fencing to create a secluded retreat and include paths for walking.

• **Aromatic plants:** Sweet-smelling plants can enhance the relaxing atmosphere. Plant herbs such as basil, rosemary, sage, lemon thyme or lavender. Surround your garden with scented trees, such as pine and eucalyptus, to create shade and shelter. A new compact, reblooming lilac, called Bloomerang, has clusters of purple-pink, sweet-scented flowers, making it excellent for creating a fragrant hedge.

• **Healing plants:** Include medicinal plants to symbolize the health aspects of your garden. Lavender, sage, basil, thyme and St.-John's-wort have been prized for centuries for their medicinal qualities. Fruits and vegetables can symbolize—and supply—nutrition. For example, the fruit of Sambucus, also called elderberry, is rich in antioxidants. An elderberry called Black Lace has intense purple-black, finely cut foliage. Its fruit can be used in jam or even wine.

• **Attracting wildlife:** Add a birdbath, bird feeders or birdhouses and put in plants that attract butterflies. A new shrub, Lo & Behold Blue Chip buddleia, attracts flocks of butterflies as well as hummingbirds. It's the only miniature butterfly bush with loads of fragrant blue flowers that bloom continuously.

• **Color:** Plants with bright colors can lift the spirits. To show support for overcoming breast cancer, consider pink flowers. A newly available choice, Invincibelle Spirit Hydrangea, is the very first pink-flowered "Annabelle" hydrangea. You can see more than 100 blooms on a single plant. Its dark-pink buds open to hot-pink flowers, which mature to a soft pink. In addition, for every Invincibelle Spirit sold, Proven Winners ColorChoice will donate a dollar to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

These plants are at better garden centers. To find the one closest to you, see www.provenwinners.com/findaretailer.