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People who spend time outdoors with plants – in parks, gardens and other green spaces – benefit from increased activity, improved health, and reduced health care costs, according to one study.<sup>1</sup>

According to the study, “Residents of neighborhoods with beautiful parks are much healthier; their increase in exercise makes them less susceptible to physical ailments and more resilient against minor illnesses.”

“As a result, these residents do not spend as much each year on health care and medical treatment, because they require fewer of these services,” the study concluded.

## Plants Make Life Better

# Green spaces encourage good health.

Additional research shows that outdoor activities can alleviate symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, stress, and depression. They can also improve cognitive function.<sup>2,3</sup>

In addition, researchers in Scotland found that activity in green spaces impacts the incidence of heart disease and stroke, providing evidence that green space appears to have real effects on health.<sup>4</sup>

By Elizabeth Petersen

#### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup>Hall, Charles and M.W. Dickson. Economic, Environmental, and Health/Well-Being Benefits Associated with Green Industry Products and Services: A Review. *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* 29(2): 96-103.

<sup>2</sup>Hartig, T., M. Mang, and G. W. Evans. 1991. Restorative Effects of Natural Environment Experiences. *Environment and Behavior* 23.

<sup>3</sup>Taylor, A.F., F.E. Kuo, and W.C. Sullivan. 2001. Coping with ADD: The Surprising Connection to Green Play Settings. *Environment and Behavior* 32.

<sup>4</sup>Green spaces ‘reduce health gap’. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7714950.stm>.

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