

Therapeutic Horticulture Session Plan



Tea Themed Session

Brief Description:

This session begins with a fun tea-rivia game before participants learn how to dry herbs for tea/infusions and brew their own herbal infusions. The session closes with mindfulness activity where participants can savour and enjoy their herbal infusion(s).

Activities Included:

1. Tea Trivia: [Link to the Activity Database](#)
2. Drying Herbs: [Link to the Activity Database](#)
3. Lavender Infusion: [Link to the Activity Database](#)
4. Mindful Tea: [Link to the Activity Database](#)

Opening/Introductions Activity: Tea Trivia

Brief Description: Tea themed true or false trivia questions.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. [Tea Trivia \(TeaRivia\) Questions](#)
2. [Tea Trivia \(TeaRivia\) Answers](#)
3. Optional: writing instruments and crayons, felts or pencil crayons

Instructions:

Refer to the [Trivia Best Practices](#) document for best practices for facilitating trivia games in a therapeutic horticulture setting.

Hands-on Activity Option 1: Drying Herbs

Brief Description: In this activity participants collect and dry herbs.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Various fresh herbs
2. String
3. Scissors
4. Tape/thumbtack (optional)
5. Dehydrator (optional)

Instructions:

1. With participants or before the activity, gather small bunches of fresh herbs together. “Woody” stemmed herbs, such as lavender, thyme, rosemary and sage, are best for drying. About 3-5 stems per bunch is ideal to prevent mold and allow for air flow.
2. Instruct participants to tie string around the stems of the herb bunches near the bottom of the stems. As participants work on this, ask them what they might like to do with the herbs once they are dried and what they think could be some benefits of drying herbs.
3. Instruct participants to hang the herb bunches upside down for 2 – 3 weeks in a cool dark space (such as a pantry or closet), turning each bunch every few days. The herb bunches can be taken home by participants or if you have a shared indoor space, they can be hung and monitored there.

Instead of hanging herbs to dry, you can also put herbs in paper bags, lay them out on trays or use a dehydrator (or an oven on the lowest setting).

Dried herbs can be used for a variety of activities later on, which is great for program continuity during months when outdoor garden activities may be inhibited due to weather. Dried herb activities include making Herbs de Provence mixes in mason jars, [infused olive oils for herbal salves](#), potpourri, herbal sachets, [infusions](#) and other culinary activities and botanical crafts.

Hands-on Activity Option 2: Lavender Infusion

Brief Description: In this activity, participants harvest fresh lavender to create an herbal infusion and dry herbs for later enjoyment in the cooler months.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Access to fresh lavender flowers
2. Scissors or pruners for harvesting
3. Paper bag
4. Kettle
5. Tea pot
6. Optional: Tea bags or strainer
7. Optional: Lemonade, Earl Grey tea

Instructions:

1. Begin by explaining that lavender is an edible flower with many delicious culinary applications, such as Herbes de Provence, which contains thyme, rosemary, marjoram, oregano, savory, bay leaf and lavender. This blend complements a wide range of dishes, including roasted meats, poultry, fish, vegetables, soups, stews, and more. It is commonly used to evoke the flavors of the Mediterranean region. It is also delicious added to homemade baking such as scones, cobbler or pies.
2. During this explanation, you may wish to go over plant safety and reiterate that although lavender is an edible flower, not all flowers are edible and that you should always be completely certain of the ID of a plant and any potential hazards before ingesting or interacting with it.
3. Explain to the group that you are going to make a lavender infusion today, which may sound fancy, but is simply lavender flowers with boiling water poured over them.
4. Now it is time to harvest the lavender. For the herbal infusion you will make today, you can use fresh lavender. While you harvest the fresh lavender buds (by either popping them off with your hands or trimming them with clean scissors or pruners) harvest some extra to dry and use in the cooler months when access to fresh herbs may be limited. Place the lavender in a paper bag and see our [Drying Herbs](#) activity for more information on how to do this. This is a wonderful way to capture the tastes of summer for later enjoyment in herbal teas.
5. Once the harvesting is complete, boil some water using a kettle. Prepare the lavender flowers in the teapot. You can either place the lavender flowers in a tea bag or strain the flowers out afterwards when you are ready to serve.

6. Pour the boiling water over the lavender buds. You can explain to the group that the hot water extracts the aromatic oils and compounds from the lavender, resulting in a fragrant and soothing herbal infusion.
7. For serving the lavender infusion, you can pour this directly in participants cups to taste, or you could add it with other ingredients, such as Earl Grey tea to make a lavender Earl Grey tea or let it cool down and add it to lemonade for a tasty lavender lemonade.
8. Make sure to remember your dried lavender buds to do this activity again in the cooler months. Enjoy!

Notes/Suggestions:

1. Use caution when handling the boiling water and keep participants away from this potential hazard where possible.
2. For a fun end of the harvest season celebration, you may wish to use this activity as part of a "Tea Party Celebration"!
3. Refer to this [document](#) for more best practices for culinary TH activities.

Closing Activity: Mindful Tea

Brief Description: Participants engage in a guided practice of mindful tea drinking, focusing on the sensory experience of preparing, sipping, and reflecting on herbal tea.

Materials & Tools Required:

1. Brewed herbal tea
2. Mugs, teacups or paper cups

Instructions:

1. **Set the Scene:** Find a quiet and comfortable space where participants can sit in a relaxed manner. Ensure that the environment is conducive to mindfulness, free from distractions and noise.
2. **Introduce the Activity:** Explain to the participants that you'll be engaging in a mindful tea drinking activity. Describe mindfulness as the practice of being fully present in the moment, without judgment or distraction.
3. **Engage the Senses:** Invite participants to hold their cups or mugs and observe the appearance, texture, and temperature of the tea. Encourage them to notice any sensations that arise in their hands and fingers as they hold the warm vessel.
4. **Mindful Sipping:** Encourage participants to take their first sip of tea slowly and deliberately. Instruct them to pay close attention to the taste, temperature, and texture of the tea as it

enters their mouths and travels down their throats. Encourage them to notice any thoughts, emotions, or bodily sensations that arise without judgment.

5. **Focus on Breath:** Guide participants to synchronize their breath with each sip of tea. Instruct them to take a deep inhale before bringing the cup to their lips, then exhale slowly as they take a sip. Encourage them to notice the rhythm of their breath and how it changes with each sip.
6. **Silent Reflection:** After the first few sips, invite participants to continue drinking their tea in silence for a few minutes. Encourage them to maintain their focus on the present moment, using their breath and senses as anchors whenever their minds wander.
7. **Group Discussion:** After several minutes of silent tea drinking, gently bring the group back together for a brief discussion. Ask participants to share their experiences with the mindful tea drinking activity, if they wish. Encourage them to reflect on any insights or observations they made during the practice.

Notes/Suggestions:

1. If you are working with clients who may have mobility or sensory impairments, consider in advance how you might adapt the prompts to ensure that everyone can participate.
2. Mindfulness exercises generally work best when the facilitator speaks in a slow, calm tone and pauses to allow participants time to think and reflect.
3. Be mindful of any participants who may have sensitivities or allergies to certain herbs or ingredients in the tea blends. Offer alternatives or allow participants to opt out if necessary.

Materials & Tools Required - Consolidated:

1. Various fresh herbs
2. String
3. Tape/thumbtack (optional)
4. Dehydrator (optional)
5. Access to fresh lavender flowers
6. Scissors
7. Pruners for harvesting
8. Paper bag
9. Kettle
10. Tea pot
11. Optional: Tea bags or strainer
12. Optional: Lemonade, Earl Grey tea
13. Brewed herbal tea

14. Mugs, teacups or paper cups
15. [Tea Trivia \(TeaRivia\) Questions](#)
16. [Tea Trivia \(TeaRivia\) Answers](#)
17. Optional: writing instruments and crayons, felts or pencil crayons