

## CHEAPER THAN THERAPY...

Have you heard that saying in regards to gardening? A lot of people think it is cute or funny and I don't disagree with that, but have you really thought about it?

We all know we live in a psychologically challenging world these days. It's an overload of information, pressure at work or school or both, running errands that never seem to end, keeping up with family and friends, making sure our kids are thriving and safe, constant technological changes, and then covid, supply shortages - omg! What else???

And so, we all turn to a professional therapist in order to make sense of all that chaos going on in our heads, to find inner peace and be able to function in this society. And I'm not saying that reaching out to a therapist is wrong or not recommended - indeed we sometimes need a little help - but there is one way we can all improve our general feelings. And it is right in front of you - your garden or backyard or even a little potted plant in your apartment or office!

I noticed a few years ago that whenever I got home from a long day in the office, I headed right to the garden just to check on the flowers, vegetables or whatever was growing in my garden, or maybe just sit on the swing for a few minutes and take in a little sun. Then I was ready for the house chores. (By the way, Chicago winters were terrible! No wonder statistics show that depression hits harder in winters!!)

Anyway, whenever I was stressed or feeling down and had the possibility, I would go outside and take a walk, even if it was just to step outside in the backyard or walk to the mailbox. Or I'll just walk around the house and check on all my houseplants, watering or trimming if needed, or just saying a quick hello. And whenever I was angry or frustrated, I started pulling weeds like crazy - and guess what?? I felt much better after!

And now I love stepping outside right after waking up and just take in the day, admire all the green in front of me, say hello to the birds, bunnies, or whatever and soak in that morning peace. To me that is kind of having a cup of coffee.

I also started really seeing nature - have you looked at any flower once and really taken in the amazing shape, color and fragrance? Or just analyzed how amazing a tall tree is grown from a tiny little seed? Have you stopped once to think of all the benefits a bee brings instead of just brushing it off as an annoying and threatening creature? And don't you feel sorry and sad when you see a snake eating the eggs or little birds in a nest? But it is all part of nature - every little thing in it has a reason and putting it all together, that's the way nature maintains itself.

All these wonders of nature make me feel good, in peace, makes me feel happy, like I belong, proud to be part of all the universe.

Again, I'm not saying to not seek professional help if needed, but give nature a try and see if it can help you feel better too! And even if all is peachy in your world, it never hurts to soak in even more happiness!



## Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers Month!!

As a thank you to all their hard work, BelaNature will be giving 5% off all purchases to all EMGV of Union County during August 2022 - just show your volunteer badge at checkout

I would like to send a shout out to all Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers (EMGV) of Union County! They put in many hours of learning, hard work and volunteering to help our community! If you know one, take a minute to say a "Thank you" and let them know about our discount this month.

And if you are wondering what these volunteers do, here is a summary as you will find on the NC Cooperative Extension website:

"A Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) is someone who volunteers with their local N.C. Cooperative Extension Center's community and residential horticulture education program. MGVs are not necessarily experts in every gardening topic. Instead, they are trained volunteers who know how to find research-based information and provide advice on sustainable gardening practices in their region. Master Gardener volunteers are life-long learners who enjoy studying topics such as gardening, soil science, entomology, and ecology. They are enthusiastic volunteers who are eager to expand Extension's reach in their county. As representatives of NC State Extension, Master Gardener volunteers are dedicated to providing research-based, non-biased information and gardening advice."

If you have a gardening question for them, you can contact them through their Growline: [ucmqwebsite@gmail.com](mailto:ucmqwebsite@gmail.com) or leave a voice message at (704)283-3822

Follow them on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/UnionCountyNCMasterGardeners/posts/10158157945352227>

If you would like to find out more about being a volunteer go to

<https://union.ces.ncsu.edu/2018/12/frequently-asked-questions-union-county-extension-master-gardener-program/>

HAVE A GREAT & BLESSED AUGUST!!

