



CONNECTING WITH THE GARDEN, WITH THE GROUP, WITH ONESELF

Title	Connecting with the garden, with the group, with oneself.
Skills	- creativity and craftsmanship; - social and civic competences; - communication and organisation.
Topics	- responsible consumption; - intercultural dialogue; - intergenerational dialogue; - education for sustainable development; - social inclusion; - sustainable urbanisation; - attention to gender; - health promotion; - horticultural techniques; - horticultural therapy.
Target Groups	- people with special needs; - children and babies (3-11 years); - young people (12-25 years);
Brief description	Sensory activity to start activities in the garden, initiate courses, visits or other activities in the garden or on the farm. Sensory experiences are a tool that helps to understand and internalise topics and concepts from another point of view. They link abstract concepts with tangible reality, memories and personal experiences, facilitating understanding and retention of information. They integrate touch, sight, smell, hearing and balance, promoting a deeper and more meaningful connection with the topics covered.





	The following activity aims to use the space of the garden to connect and experience in a different way; it can be done at the beginning of a workshop, a tour or any activity that takes place in the garden. It can serve as a therapeutic (therapist-led), educational or recreational activity. It can be done for courses but also as a daily activity for the start of work in the garden. In the garden you can find a diversity of smells, sounds, surfaces, plants with different flavours, birds, insects and much more that stimulate the senses and allow you to connect with the space, the moment and each individual.
Objectives	Perceiving the garden and space through the senses (hearing, touch, sight, balance, smell, taste). Allow the experience to lead to memories. Help participants arrive and connect with the place and space.
Materials	The orchard or the farm or the forest, the natural environment and all its elements. A vegetable garden, a farm or a varied green space with different plants, birds, insects, shady and sunny areas, flat and steep areas, areas of earth, grass, sand, gravel and more are ideal conditions and no additional material is required. Furthermore, it is important that it is a quiet and safe space where participants feel comfortable and secure. If the space is small or you do not have some elements or the space is not so complete, you can complete the experience with: - Aromatic plants - A path of the senses (a 3-4 metre path with different materials on the ground: leaves, sand, stones, earth, rice husks, logs, a water tray or other options).





	It is important that this route is in the midst of natural elements, that it has shady and sunny areas, that it passes through aromatic plants, flowering plants or trees, that it passes through the garden where there are vegetables of all kinds, areas where the surface changes from soil, grass, leaves, sand, gravel or whatever is available. It should be a walk that takes five to ten minutes at a slow pace.
Implementation	It is an excellent activity for medium to large groups (15 to 50 people) as the start of a workshop or meeting, before or after the presentation of participants. Phase 1: A circle is made with the participants to welcome them and a check-in activity is carried out, it is important that at the end of this activity the participants achieve calmness through a short verse or poem. Phase 2: Directions are provided: - Optional: it can be done barefoot for those who want to take off their shoes. - The facilitator leads the group in a line walk. - It is very important to do the tour in silence in order to perceive everything more intensively. - During the visit, it is important to observe, to smell, to feel with your hands, your feet, your skin, to listen and to focus your senses on natural things. Step 3: The tour is over and we return to the circle in silence. Step 4: Each person tells in a few words what struck them, what came to mind or what they remembered during the visit. This step can also be used as an opportunity for participants to briefly introduce themselves.
Evaluation	The evaluation of the activity can be carried out with each of the groups, depending on whether they are





	young, , etc. in different ways, on the basis of a short answer question, short discussions or a questionnaire. Participants' answers to the question after the tour can be collected and used to support the evaluation of the activity. After this evaluation and at another time, it is important for the organisers, facilitators, trainers and teachers to meet and evaluate how the dynamic went, how it was received, how the participants participated and how they responded; for this it is important to identify whether the dynamic brought something new and what its impact is on the development of the other activities, what were the positive aspects, what can be improved and finally to gather proposals to adapt it if necessary.
Tips	- Provide an alternative activity that can be carried out indoors in case of bad weather. - Early morning is the ideal time for this activity, due to the availability of participants and the cool weather. - Silence on the route is very important - Give everyone space to share something of the experience. - Vary the language and mode of communication according to the age of the target group

