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Is gardening a hobby for young or old people?

Do you need a big garden to enjoy gardening, or can someone living in an apartment also do a bit of gardening?

Do you think gardening is an expensive hobby?

What do you think of the idea of everyone having a vegetable and herb garden to help the world’s food problems?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action (verbs) | Description (adj) | Tools/equipment | Animals  | Others |
| digmowpickplant sowwaterweedgrowbloom | big/large/hugeEnglish/Japaneselow maintancenaturaltraditionaluntidyunkeptsymmetrical | Wellington bootsgloveskneeling padlawn mowerrakeforkhoespadewatering can wheelbarrowaxegarden shears | beebutterflycaterpillarflyhedgehogladybirdmolemosquitoslugsnailworm | bulbseedsoilsandpitslideswimming poolbird feederfountainbenchgreenhousepathpebblerock garden |

What is it about gardening that makes many people love it?

What kind of gardening do you like?

How much time do you spend in the garden?

Do you think gardening is good for your health?

What are some vegetables which you grow in your garden?

Do you think trees need pruning every year?

What are names of common flowers in your country?

Is there a flower store near your house?

Would you prefer to have a flower garden or a vegetable garden? Why?

What do you like best, a landscaped garden or the formal garden?

How does your family help you when you are gardening?

Which do you prefer for your garden organic or chemical fertilizers?

**Listening:**

**Sophie** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Sophie…

**Neil** And I'm Neil… What \_\_\_\_\_ you do at the weekend, Sophie?

**Sophie** I did a spot of gardening.

**Neil** So, you are a keen gardener?

**Sophie** Yes, I am, Neil. And gardening is the subject of today's show! Now \_\_\_\_\_don't we start witha quiz question?

**Neil** Good idea.

**Sophie** What percentage of people in the UK said that gardening makes them happier, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ toa survey conducted by the Royal Horticultural Society? Is it…a) \_\_\_\_\_%b) 52%Or c) \_\_\_\_\_%?

**Neil** Well, I'll guess: b) 52%.

**Sophie** Well, we'll find out later on if you got it right or not. So, does gardening \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_you happy,Neil?

**Neil** Well, I tried to \_\_\_\_\_\_ some tomatoes once. And to be honest it made me rather anxious. All the leaves curled up… and then dropped off.

**Sophie** \_\_\_\_ you get any tomatoes?

**Neil** No.

**Sophie** So you don't have green \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then? Why are you looking at your fingers, Neil? I wasn'tasking whether you literally have green fingers! Having **green fingers** means a natural\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for growing plants. It's funny you should say gardening makes you anxious becauseother people find it calming and relaxing.

**Neil** Do they? Do you?

**Sophie** Yes, I do. Being in the fresh air, in all weathers, communing with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_…

**Neil** Sounds very unpleasant!

**Sophie In all weathers** means something you do in all types of weather – rain, snow, sunshine.And **communing with nature** means feeling\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to nature, and being a part of it.

**Neil** Well, when I tried communing with nature my hands got all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – I got stung by nastycreepy-crawlies – and I got soil up my nose. I didn't enjoy it at all.

**Sophie** Try wearing protective clothing next time – and maybe a nose plug too! A **creepy-crawly** is a small \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by the way.

**Neil** So do you\_\_\_\_\_\_ getting your hands dirty, Sophie?

**Sophie** Yes, I love it. And it turns out there might be a good reason for this. Dr Christopher Lowryfrom the University of Colorado conducted an experiment to test whether \_\_\_\_\_ gives us a **natural high** – meaning to make us happy without taking drugs. He injected a bacterium commonly found in soil into mice to see what \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this would have on them. Let's hear what he said in this BBC programme.

**INSERT Dr Christopher Lowry, neuroscientist, University of Colorado US and Helena Merriman, presenter**

**CL:** Rodents like mice and rats are very good \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and it was found many years ago that if you treat animals with antidepressant drugs and then put the animals in just a beaker of water it would cause the animals to swim for longer periods of time.

**HM:** After injecting the mice with the bacterium Dr Lowry placed them in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of water.

**CL:** These mice that had been injected with bacterium swam during a 6-minute test for a longer period of time than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that just got a placebo.

**Sophie** So the bacterium had a similar effect on the mice as an antidepressant drug might. When we dig in soil we **ingest** – or absorb – the bacterium through our lungs or cuts in our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A **placebo**, by the way, is a substance with no physical effects that is used when testing a drug.So here one group of mice were injected with the bacterium and another group wereinjected with the placebo. And since the mice seemed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when treated with soilbacteria, there's a good chance we would too.

**Neil** Let's move on and hear about how gardening can be **therapeutic** – or used to try andtreat addiction. Here's Scot Stephenson, a recovering \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who is learning to garden tohelp cure him.

**INSERT Scot Stephenson, recovering alcoholic**

I left school early or should I say I got expelled... came here, I got my NVQ level 2 which is my first qualification and enjoyed it ever since.

**Neil** So Scot Stephenson was **expelled** from school – he was forced to leave – with noqualifications. But with the help of a support group he now has an **NVQ** – that's a NationalVocational Qualification here in Britain – in gardening.

**Sophie** That's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. At a centre in the UK, recovering alcoholics have been given the opportunityto plant, grow, and even sell their produce. These addicts are literally breaking theiraddiction by breaking the soil.

**Neil** Nicely phrased, Sophie!

**Sophie** Thank you! Now, are you \_\_\_\_\_\_, Neil, for the answer to today's quiz question?

**Neil** I am.

**Sophie** I asked: What percentage of people in the UK said that gardening makes them happier,according to a survey conducted by the Royal Horticultural Society? Is it… a) 22%, b) 52%or c) 82%?

**Neil** I guessed b) 52%. I'm wrong, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I?

**Sophie** Oh, you are Neil, I'm sorry. The percentage of people who really enjoy gardening is much\_\_\_\_\_. You should have chosen option c). A survey from the Royal Horticultural Societyhas shown that Brits truly are a nation of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_with 82% saying it makes them feelhappier. The results also revealed that 70% said that given the choice, they would prefer tospend their working day in the garden with just 9% opting for an office and\_\_\_\_\_\_% undecided.

**Answer the following questions:**

What did Sophie do at the weekend?

What percentage of people in the UK said that gardening makes them happier? A) B) C)

Is Neil a good gardener?

What happened when he tried to grow tomatoes?

What is creepy crawly?

What was the result of the experiment with mice?

How can gardening be used as a therapy?

Was Neil’s answer to today’s question right?

What percentage of people would like to spend their working day in the office?

**Discussion continues:**

Do you like looking at gardening shows on TV and reading gardening magazines?

Do you know anyone who is crazy about gardening?

Do you think gardening is the same all over the world?

Would you like a job as a gardener, or as a landscape architect?

Do you like walking around gardens?

Are gardens good for the environment?

What do you know / think about Japanese Zen gardens?

Do you have green fingers (UK) green thumbs (USA)?

Do you think all schools should have a classroom garden and a kitchen garden?

What dangers are involved with gardening?

Do you like visiting botanical gardens?

**PROBLEMS:** Can you think of any problems you might have with your neighbours? How would you solve them?

example:

* animals digging under fence
* balls over the fence causing damage
* tree growing over fence