

Study shows that garden appreciation boosts well-being

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A new study lead by Swinburne University of Technology graduate Leith Symes has discovered positive wellbeing outcomes as a result of gardening appreciation in regional Australia. Credit: Swinburne University of Technology

The verdict is in: you really should stop and smell the roses!

A new study lead by Swinburne University of Technology graduate Leith Symes has discovered that appreciating gardens can boost the health and

well-being of regional Australians.

While the idea is not a new one, past research was focused on [metropolitan areas](#), and the act of gardening rather than appreciating them.

"'Surrounding yourself with beauty': exploring the health promotion potential of a rural garden appreciation group," published this month in *Health Promotion International*, opens the door to potential new health promotion initiatives to improve the poorer [health](#) outcomes experienced by regional and rural Australians compared with their city counterparts.

Flowers and friendship

Symes was inspired by the gap in research linking gardens and well-being outside metropolitan areas, particularly when he heard about Colac Horticultural and Marvelous Property Appreciation Society (CHAMPAS).

"I was corrected many times when I said the group's name—they'd say, 'No, no, no, you've got it wrong. It's CHAMPAS like champagne,' because at their events there's often champagne involved," he said.

Formed in 2017, the volunteer group from south-west Victoria hosts meet ups of notable gardens and properties in the area.

"That whole idea that because people live in the countryside, they're not desperate for [green space](#) and gardens is a bit flawed," Symes said.

"It was extremely surprising the amount of people that were involved in CHAMPAS."

Key findings from the study suggest well-being outcomes include direct

and indirect impacts on [physical fitness](#), social connectedness and friendship, and an improved sense of pride and [self-esteem](#).

More information: Leith Symes et al, 'Surrounding yourself with beauty': exploring the health promotion potential of a rural garden appreciation group, *Health Promotion International* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/heapro/daad010](#)

Provided by Swinburne University of Technology

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