

Beneficial Blooms:

The Healthful Advantages of Flowers and Plants

As we navigate through challenging times, we could all use something to provide a moment of calm, lift our spirits, and put a smile on our face. The good news is that nature has provided a wonderful way to bring those benefits, and more, to your life and the lives of people you care about: flowers and plants.

Did you know that flowers can play a key role in reducing stress? It's true. Research has shown that 32% of people feel stress every day. Moreover, 1 in 4 women experience stress multiple times a day, and flowers can make a positive difference. In fact, the University of North Florida recently conducted a study entitled *The Impact of Flowers on Perceived Stress Among Women*, which concluded that there is a significant [reduction in stress](#) when flowers are added to an indoor environment.

“There is a growing body of research that illustrates how environmental design positively impacts health. Now it is both intuitive and scientifically known that adding elements of nature, like flowers, to interiors promotes well-being,” said lead researcher Erin Largo-Wight, Ph.D., Associate Professor of the University of North Florida's Department of Public Health. “Our findings are important from a public health perspective because adding flowers to reduce stress does not require tremendous effort to generate a meaningful effect,” continued Largo-Wight. “When life seems to be in a constant state of frenzy, flowers can provide us with a much-needed moment of calm.”

Another study showed floral blooms can help people [feel less anxious](#) and worried. Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, conducted behavioral research revealing that when fresh cut flowers are present in the home, people tend to worry less. Participants in the study most often placed flowers where they spend a lot of time in their homes – such as their kitchens, dining rooms and living rooms. “Other research has proven that flowers make people happy when they receive them,” Etcoff said. “What we didn't know is that spending a few days with flowers in the home can affect a wide variety of feelings.”

An additional study demonstrated the ability of flowers to improve [emotional health](#). Researchers at Rutgers found that just the presence of flowers can have an immediate positive effect on a person's happiness and overall mood. The study showed that flowers trigger happy emotions and participants in the study expressed “true” or “excited” smiles upon receiving flowers while demonstrating “extraordinary delight” as well as gratitude.

Employers will be glad to know that flowers can be a game-changer for their staffs, making employees happier as well as more productive. A study conducted at Texas A&M University demonstrated that in [workplace environments](#) where flowers are present, workers' idea generation, creative performance and ability to solve issues were enhanced. “People's productivity, in the form of innovation and creative problem solving, improved – which in certain circumstances could mean the difference between mild and great business success,” said Dr. Roger Ulrich.

Complementing the diverse ways that flowers can enhance lives during challenging times (or any time!) are the health benefits of house plants. Plants have been shown to reduce

stress levels and even substantially improve air quality. In fact, you might be surprised to learn that NASA has actually required plants to be onboard certain spaceships.

Plants have the ability to: reduce carbon dioxide levels in a home; control humidity levels; reduce pollution levels in a home (i.e., the pollutants benzene and nitrogen); diminish airborne dust levels; lower room temperatures; and add pure, clean oxygen to a room. With all that said, plants can be ideal for home-based workspaces.

When you need a pick-me-up or want to send a big smile, flowers and plants could be the perfect choice.

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