

## Sensory Scratch & Sniff Anytime Activity

Rev 01/23/24



Eldergrow offers a therapeutic connection to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways with plants – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, physically and more.

**Summary:** Engage all 5 of a resident's senses – great to use as a redirect tool and to increase resident engagement!

### Activity Objectives:

Objective 1: Resident engage in sensory stimulation (SS)

Objective 2: Resident will engage cognitive skills (CS)

Objective 3: Resident will engage spatial awareness (SA)

### Supplies:

Herbs such as mint, sage, basil, rosemary, oregano or thyme from the kitchen, nursery, or grocery

### Set-Up:

- Have a journal ready for any comments or observations.

### Directions:

**Step 1: Sight – Observation** (Enter any notes & observations into a journal.)

- As residents gather, encourage them to look at the herbs  
*Q: Do you know the names of these herbs?*
- Look at the different herbs and try to find similarities & differences between them.  
*Q: What are the different shades of green or different shapes of the leaves?*  
*Q: Are the leaves' edges smooth or more detailed? Are the veins strong or faint?*

### Step 2: Touch

- There are lots of different texture in nature to observe and experience.
- Look at the herbs as a whole and pick out the different textures of the leaves.
- Some plants' leaves can also have really different and interesting textures.



Sage



Mint

- Contrast leaves with different textures such as sage vs mint.

### **Step 3: Scent**

- Many plants have wonderful smells, but herbs are especially aromatic.
- Remove a leaf from an herb and rub the leaf between two fingers.
- Smell the oils that rubbed off on your fingers.

*Q: Do any of the leaves have a scent? Are some scents stronger than others?*

*Q: How would you describe the fragrance of the leaf? Is it sweet, savory, citrusy, spicy?*

- Repeat with other herbs and any other scented plants (such as geranium).

*Q: Can you identify this herb simply by scent alone? Have you cooked with it before?*

*Q: If so, what was your favorite recipe using this herb?*

### **Step 4: Taste**

- Ensuring this is safe for your residents to do and the herbs have been washed, let's engage in the sense of taste.
- Pick off a leaf and put it on your tongue.
- Now slowly chew the leaf.

*Q: How does this herb feel and taste?*

*Q: Now does it remind you of any favorite (or not so favorite) dishes or recipes?*

### **Sense 5: Sound**

- You may be asking, how in the world can I stimulate the sense of sound with a plant? Well, all of the observations and memories evoked around the senses of sight, touch, smell and taste have simulated the sense of sound as well!

**Closing:** Record all observations in a journal.

- *Q: What did you learn today?*
- *Q: What was your favorite part of today's activity?*

