

HAND SQUEEZED LEMON TEA INFUSED WITH FRESH HERBS

Residents will enjoy making and sipping warm lemon tea infused with fresh herbs after juicing their own lemons. They will also learn about the benefits of lemons and herbs.

Please amend this lesson to adapt to the abilities and interest of your residents. You know your residents best!

If you don't have an Eldergrow garden, you can still interact with nature by collecting flowers and leaves during a garden courtyard or nature walk. You can also safely enjoy nature from a window!

Wellness Objectives:

1: Resident will engage in socialization (S)

2: Resident will engage sensory stimulation (SS)

3: Resident will engage motor skills (MS)

Eldergrow offers a **therapeutic connection** to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, & physically.

MATERIALS:



- Herbal plant or several sprigs of flavorful herbs from the garden, nursery or grocery store.
- 5-8 **washed** lemons (microwave whole lemons for 10-20 seconds ahead of time for more juice and use 1/2 lemon per cup of tea) (Grocery store)
- Paper towels to dry washed herbs
- Tea strainer/colander, knife and cutting board
- Clear pitchers or jars (plastic, not glass)
- Measuring cup, stirring spoons and bowls
- Safety scissors
- Food handling gloves (for anyone handling lemons/herbs)
- Tea cups/mugs and 32oz of very warm water (4-8 oz water per resident)
- **Talking Points:** "Juicy Facts About Lemons" & "Herb Benefits & History"
- *Optional:* For sweet tea and/or more health benefits, add 1 tsp honey per mug (to taste)
- *Optional:* For more flavor, you can add **grated ginger or lemon zest** to the tea.
- *Optional:* Lemon-squeezer or reamer (to get more juice!), salad spinner/ mortar/ pestle to wash and crush herbs (great for exercising motor skills)

Safety Notes: Make sure residents wear food-handling gloves. Do not use sharp knives (cut lemons in advance). Avoid scalding hot water.

If your community doesn't allow culinary activities, please use this alternative lesson found on Nature Connect portal.

PREPARATION:

- If you have a garden, have residents gather around it or a view of nature. Have journal ready for garden/nature observations.
- Set out ingredients, directions, and **Talking Points**.
- **Watch our short video** on the Nature Connect portal for tips & tricks on this activity.
- *Optional:* Create herb infused tea 1-2 days ahead of time to add to with this lesson for maximum flavor.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS – CHOOSE 1, 2 OR ALL 3 PARTS:

1. GARDEN & NATURE OBSERVATIONS:

- If you have a garden, gather around it so residents can make observations, or gather around a window.
- Bring safe scissors and garden tools, journal with pen, and half full watering can (keep it light).
- Jot down 3 things in the journal (or ask for a volunteer resident to be today's garden/nature secretary)
- Bring a ruler and have residents help measure plants. Mark their heights in the journal and observe their growth over time!
- Do you notice anything different or new about the garden? There are no wrong answers.
- How does the soil feel - Too wet? Too dry? If too dry, ask a volunteer to water.
- Do you see any expired flowers or leaves that we could remove?
- Are there any plants that are overgrown? Have a resident use a bowl to collect spent plant materials & prunings.

2. TALKING POINTS & CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Take turns reading "**Juicy Facts about Lemons**" Talking Points. *Have you ever tried an herb flavored tea?*
- Read the "**Herb Benefits**" Talking Points. Talk about lemonade stands and see how folks might reminisce about other clever tricks they used to make a few bucks when they were little. Brainstorm some other uses for lemons.

3. MAKING HAND SQUEEZED LEMON TEA WITH HERBS

Watch our short video on the Nature Connect portal for tips & tricks on this activity.

You can choose to only use one herb or a blend of several. Rinse well with water, pat dry with a paper towel.

- In clear pitcher(s) or jar(s), add the cleaned herbs and pour very warm water over them to steep.
- Muddle the herbs (add optional grated lemon zest and/or ginger) in the warm water using the back of a spoon to help release the herb's oils that will help infuse the tea. (Or crush herbs separately first with mortar/pestle.)
- Roll **pre-cut** lemons between hands or on table. It's a good exercise opportunity. (See Closing Activity Notes*)
- Ensure everyone is wearing food handling **gloves** if helping. Distribute the lemon halves and bowls to residents.
- Have residents squeeze the lemon halves into their bowls, just using their hands or use a lemon reamer. (Heating the whole lemons for 10-20 seconds in the microwave ahead of time will make them easier to squeeze by hand.) (The squeezing and rolling motion with pressure works the hand and arm muscles!)
- Pour lemon juice/herbal mixture into the pitcher of herbal water to mix. Pour it out over a strainer to separate the seeds and herb pieces and add a little sweetener to balance the sour lemon. If one prefers a sweeter tea, add more to their cup. (You may need to make or sweeten individual cups so residents aren't touching each other's.)
- **Safety Tip:** Do not have herbal sprigs/pieces in the final cups of tea as they might pose a choking hazard.
- *Optional:* Add lemons and herbs in a covered jar/pitcher of water in the refrigerator overnight so residents can look forward to a cold-brewed batch of lemony tea tomorrow! (Make sure kitchen staff knows to strain all of the herbs from the final infused tea before giving to residents.)
- As everyone enjoys their lemony herbal tea, encourage conversation and memories around the different tastes and encourage more favorite tea-time or spring-time activities reminiscing. Try smelling any left over herbs to see if residents can pick out the flavors in the tea mixture as they sip.



CLOSING & AMENDMENTS FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

- Have your **garden journal ready** again to write down resident **comments on the tea plus garden observations and tasks**, and see if they have suggestions on an even better tea!
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- ***Please Note: Don't Miss Out on this Lemon and Herb Sensory Stimulation Opportunity!** Take time to have residents smell the herb(s) and the lemons as they make the lemon tea mixture. Pass around sprigs of herbs, and lemon peels and do a "Scratch and Sniff" sensory stimulation. Ask resident(s) questions such as:
 - **Sight:** Do you know what herb this is? Notice the leaf shape. Is it a wide or narrow leaf? Does it have a smooth or jagged edge? Does it have any other interesting features?
 - **Touch:** Feel the leaf. Is it smooth or bumpy? Thick or thin?
 - **Smell:** Smell the leaf after rubbing it. Do you know what that scent is? What does it remind you of?
 - **Taste:** Have you tasted this herb before? Do you have any favorite dishes that use this herb? (If you would like to taste the leaf, wash it first.)
 - **Sound:** This "Scratch & Sniff" conversation also activates the auditory cortex (hearing) part of the brain.
- As an ongoing activity, have residents **tie together extra herbal bundles** to hang up to dry above the Eldergrow garden or in a window to use in future teas and make this practice a regular part of a healthy diet.
- **Assist residents** with walkers or wheelchairs during the walk to the Eldergrow garden or outside to gather herbs. Invite them to point out the herbs they want for their project and assist with picking if needed. Allow residents to guess the herbs, using their five senses described above, and give them descriptive clues before giving the answer.
- **Especially ask residents with limited fine motor skills to help roll and squeeze the lemons.** They may lose ability with skill in their fingers, but strength lasts much longer!
- If a resident can't make it to the garden, **bring the garden to them!** Pot up an herb to bring to them, or cuttings out of the courtyard if that is more manageable.
- Perhaps a resident would just like to read aloud the **step-by-step instructions**. Use a larger print off for easy visibility. They will feel good helping their peers in this way! (Page 4)
- **For something a little more challenging for IL participants-** Give them a zester or vegetable peeler to zest the lemon rinds to add to the tea, or make pretty yellow spiral peels for a decorative addition.
- Turn on some **background music** to help set the atmosphere! (Daily Programming)

HAND SQUEEZED LEMON TEA RECIPE

Lemon Herbal Tea – Step by Step Directions:

1. Roll pre-cut lemons between hands or on table.
2. Put on food handling gloves. Squeeze the lemon halves just using your hands or use a citrus reamer. These motions with pressure works the hand and arm muscles!
3. Add **some** of the washed and dried herbs to the bowl of lemon juice and muddle the herbs (add optional grated lemon zest and/or ginger) with the lemon juice, using the back of a spoon to help release the herb's oils that will help infuse them together. (Or you can crush the herbs separately first using a mortar/pestle.)
4. Pour lemon juice/herbal mixture through a strainer and into pitcher with 32 oz of water to separate the seeds and herbal pieces. If you prefer a sweeter tea, add honey, sugar, etc to your taste. Stir until sugar is dissolved. (Or make individual cups with half a lemon, herb tea and sugar to taste.)

***Safety Tip:** Do not add herbal sprigs/pieces to the final cup of tea.

Place a covered jar/pitcher in the fridge with water and remaining herbs & lemon rinds so you can look forward to batch of cold-infused tea tomorrow! (Make sure to strain the herbs from the final infused herb lemon tea mixture.)

***Optional: Make Ahead Herb Infused Sweetener**

- Boil 2 cups of water on stove, reduce heat to low.
- Add 4-6 washed sprigs (handful) of crushed herbs to simmering water, mix and cover on a very low heat for 15 minutes. (Woody herbs like rosemary, thyme (or ginger root) – 40 minutes.)
- Turn off stove and add 3/4 cup sugar or honey to boiled water and stir until dissolved
- Let infused sugar water sit for 20 minutes on stove to cool. Strain.
- Store infused herb sweetener for up to three days, covered in refrigerator.