



Hi, I am Izzie, a first generation, Caribbean-American micro-farmer located in Northern Florida. I own and operate Flor-ish Farms (pronounced Flourish), a 1/8 acre micro-farm. We are a crop farm who's main crops are microgreens, low maintenance greens such as: salad blends, kale, collards, mustard swiss chard, culinary herbs, and flowers from spring to fall. I am a firm believer in the healing powers of agriculture and the way it works with your mental, physical and spiritual well being.

There is often a stigma that comes with mental health especially in communities of Color. I believe in breaking down that stigma by using the tool in my hand, agriculture. There is a powerful connection between mental health and agriculture, there is powerful healing in the methods of gardening. I am a firm believer in gloveless gardening. Why, you might ask? There is a healthy bacteria in the soil called mycobacterium that alerts your brain cells to produce serotonin - a natural antidepressant. Gardening provides a routine which is good for those who struggle with depression, it gives them something to look forward to and connect with as well as providing grounding methods for themselves that allows them to connect with the earth/soil.

Therapeutic gardening, or garden therapy has healing properties, whether you have a therapy garden, or your garden is therapeutic for you the benefits are beyond belief. There are several types of therapy gardens, you have your sensory gardens which work on the senses and are great for anxiety, they work with the senses and grounding. Gardening for therapy is slightly different, you don't have a blueprint but instead you are, planting your own garden and creating your own space, growing your own food/herbs and using it to help improve and benefit your mental health. When planting a garden there are lots of herbs or plants you can use to help benefit the mental health.

Basil - It contains minerals/ compounds that can help to alleviate anxiety and depression, increase your brain power, and help with critical thinking. Basil can also help with fibromyalgia, arthritis or to help with menstrual cramps.

Lavender - perfect for your therapy garden, it's famous for aromatherapy. but it can also be drunk as tea. it helps to calm, help with anxiety, depression and ptsd. It can also be used to help treat insomnia. may also improve mood disorders and fatigue.

Thyme - is great for brain stimulation, brain fog, respiratory issues and can be used to help anxiety and depression. also great for menstrual cramps. high in antioxidants.

Rosemary - rosemary tea, is famous as a wife tale for helping moms go into labor. but outside of natal benefits, it helps the mental health. It boosts brain stimulation, is an anti inflammatory, improves your brain health and memory, can also be used to regulate your hormones.

Planting herbs in your garden that help your mental health make the world of difference, and can help break the stigma against mental health.

I personally have experienced the healing that agriculture brings, farming/gardening has given me a purpose in life again, and brought me a level of healing that I know could only come through God and connecting with the earth. Plant therapy in all forms, from farming to having house plants all brings a level of healing, I truly believe it's the gateway to mental healing, a gateway whose full potential is finally being discovered.

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