

The History of Sensory Gardens

The purpose of the sensory garden is to stimulate the senses. Your garden contains plants to stimulate every sense. Several of the plants are multi-purpose in the dome. People in all parts of the world create and enjoy outdoor sensory gardens every day! You can find Sensory Gardens in a wide range of places from Universities, botanical gardens, to assisted care facilities. Sensory gardens are a favorite for children and have proven to be very useful in helping disabled individuals develop their senses. Your Sensory Garden is also a terrarium, which date back to at least 2,500 years ago in Greece.

Create Your Own World

Meander down the winding gravel paths and stimulate your senses by experiencing the array of fascinating stones and wonderful plants...

The rustling of the Cabbage Palm creates a sense of excitement and activity.

The crushed leaves of the Eucalyptus emit an invigorating, fresh scent.

The patterns of pink, white, and red on the Polka Dot delight you; the varying textures of the stones provide calm.

The fleshy leaves of the Aloe seem so distinct from other plants, and their soothing sap provides relief for your skin.

The herbs, with their variety of sharp, flavorful tastes, enliven your senses, and wake you up to the sights and smells around you.



Planting, Care, Variety and Garden Information

Tantalize your senses with over ten varieties of exotic and fun plants, including Aloe, the Pink Polka Dot, the Eucalyptus, and the Cabbage Palm! This easy-to-grow kit sprouts in one week and can grow indoors for years—all with minimal care.

The Sensory Dome comes complete with everything you need to create your own miniature sensory garden: a closed terrarium, dry gravel riverbeds, paths, rock formations, fun markers, scenic decals, and seed for tons of cool plants! You can even design your own garden layout, either from scratch or with the help of the included tips!

Contents of the Sensory Dome

- Planting Dome
- 5 color packs of seed with instructions
- 5 color decals
- 1 Oz. Blue Riverbed gravel
- 3.5 oz. Decorative Pathway gravel
- 1 pound planting mixture
- 2 Oz. Contemplation Stones
- 5 plant stakes
- Instruction Booklet

Planting Your Sensory Dome

1. Design your garden on paper (see Tips section);
2. Fill dome with planting mixture;
3. Add two cups of water;
4. Place Aloe seeds on top of soil where you would like a "lake" and spread a solid layer of blue gravel over the seeds;
5. Divide remainder of the dome into 3 or 4 sections by making "paths" with the tan gravel (paths should be about 1" wide and a ¼" high);
6. Place each variety of seed in a grouping on top of the soil: plant 1/3 packet of herb seeds, save remainder to replant after use;
7. Insert planting tag/marker into planting mixture near each grouping of seed;
8. Gently apply additional water on all seeds and gravel until soil is thoroughly wet (be careful not to wash the seeds or gravel away);
9. Arrange decorative meditation stones around garden (not on top of seeds);
10. Line up the tabs on your dome and planting base so they form a "V" and snap dome onto planting base;
11. Apply stickers on every other panel on sides of base of planting container;
12. Place you sensory dome near a window that receives bright light;
13. Leave the dome on the planting base at least 4-8 weeks; it is up to you after that if you would like to keep your dome on or not.



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Tips on Designing Your Garden

- It is important to plant the types of plants in groupings, as opposed to mixing them up. This will allow them to grow best in their own “microclimate.”
- Make sure you follow the instructions carefully in terms of the order of things.
- It is best to first create paths, then decide where the Aloe “lake” should be placed.
- Try to use the paths to create “separate” planting areas in the dome.
- When planting the seed, leave some space for the decorative stones.
- It is not necessary to use all the seed. If you do, consider removing some and leaving the healthy seedlings ¼” to ½” apart.
- When placing the seeds, consider the growth patterns as outlined below:
 - Aloe—slowest to sprout, must be under a layer of blue gravel to sprout, when it grows, it will be a thin plant with thick leaves.
 - Polka Dot Plant—sprouts very quickly and grows tall and bushy.
 - Herbs—sprouts very quickly and will grow tall and bushy.
 - Eucalyptus—sprouts after Herbs and Eucalyptus and before Aloe. It likes the most space of the plants and cannot be allowed to dry out. It is not as fast growing as the Herbs and the Polka Dot Plant.
 - Cabbage Palm—sprouts like Eucalyptus and will form roots before growing aggressively.
- Place the decorative stones in the spaces you left for them.



Caring For Your Sensory Dome

- When the dome is on the planting base, the water will recycle. You will only need to add water once every 4-6 months!
- If you would like a true terrarium, apply clear tape over the holes in the top of the terrarium. In this case, you will not need to water at all.
- If you take the dome off the planting container, water once every week, being sure to let the soil dry out between waterings.
- While the plants in your garden are resilient, and can provide you with years of growth, it is critical to not overwater them.
- The plants in your Sensory Dome prefer bright light, but do not want to be in direct sunlight for long periods of time.
- For best results, rotate the Sensory Dome a quarter-turn every few days.
- If the soil appears too wet, try leaving the lid off so some of the moisture can evaporate.
- Feel free to trim your plants by “pinching off” or cutting new growth.

Fun Facts and Info about the Plant in Your Sensory Dome

Pink Polka Dot Plant

Sight, the variation of color spots on this plant will amaze you

Botanical Name: Hypoestes phyllostachya
Origin: island of Madagascar

Planting:

- Seed will germinate in four days.
- Prefer moderately moist conditions and likes high humidity.
- Germinate in a covered container and cover the seeds very lightly.

Care:

- Likes bright light, but not full sun, can handle full sun to shade. Too much light will cause leaves to curl, too little light will cause them to stretch.
- Keep the plant pinched back, as they should not be more than 16" high.
- Cuttings will root easily in water.

Information:

- Color patterns on the leaves are not true variegation but is called “figurative patterning,” similar to the stripes of a Zebra.
- Forms a compact plant 6-8 inches high.



- Water and place in a sunny place.

Care:

- Dislikes shade.
- Can tolerate a wide range of dry to wet soil conditions.
- Strongly resent root disturbance.

Information:

- Citronellal is an essential oil found in most Eucalyptus.
- It is in leaf all year, in flower from July to August.
- Scented flowers are hermaphrodite.
- Noted for attracting wild life.
- Leaves are a traditional aboriginal herbal remedy.
- Used in SW Europe for timber and to dry out wet land where mosquitoes breed.
- The essential oil found in the leaves is a powerful antiseptic and is used all over the world for relieving coughs, colds, sore throats, and infections. The essential oil of this plant is a common ingredient in many over the counter cold remedies.

Cabbage Palm

Hearing, run your hand across the plant after it grows a little bit and you will hear a rustling noise

Botanical Name: Cordyline australis
Origin: New Zealand

Planting:

- Soak seeds for a day before planting or sow directly into pre-moistened soil.
- Cover with no more than 1/8 of an inch of soil.
- Germinate in a covered planter to provide humidity.

Care:

- Fast growing and easy to cultivate.
- Allow to dry out thoroughly between waterings; then water generously.
- Likes bright light.

Information:

- Can reach a height of 20m.
- Flowers frequently, sweetly scented, and produces abundant fruit and seed.
- No exotic garden could be complete without it.
- Will eventually grow into a trunk.



Aloe

Touch, the leaves are thick and soft, the sap of this plant is very good to treat skin.

Botanical Name: Aloe
Origin: Africa

Planting:

- Place seed on top of pre-moistened soil in a covered planting container;
- Place a layer of gravel on top of the seed and push down;
- Water and place in a sunny spot.

Care:

- Let dry out thoroughly between waterings.
- Likes bright light and partial sun, depending on size.
- Because the plant is 95% water, it can not be allowed to freeze.

Information:

- The first mention of aloe vera as a medicine dates back to 1700 BC.
- Cleopatra supposedly bathed in the juices of the plant to maintain her youthful appearance.
- Christopher Columbus state Aloe was one of the four indispensable vegetables.
- There are 200 biologically active compounds in aloe.
- 250 human health problems have been targeted with Aloe.
- Aloe is one of the most famed plants of Arabian Medicine.
- In East Africa, Aloe is an ancient medicinal plant that is still very popular today.



Eucalyptus

Smell, crush the leaves in your hand

Common Name: Cider Gum
Botanical Name: Eucalyptus gunnii
Origin: Australia

Planting:

- Place seeds on top of soil in a covered planter;



Herb Mixture

Taste, all herbs are edible

Mixture contains assorted herbs including: Rosemary, Parsley, Basil, Thyme, Chives, Fennel, Dill, Marjoram

Planting:

- Place seeds on top of soil in a covered container;
- Water thoroughly and place on a windowsill.

Care:

- Herbs will grow in bright light on a window sill.
- Water frequently as your herbs will grow quickly.

Information:

Herbs are used to flavor foods and drinks and to make spices. They also have a myriad of other uses from bases of medicines, insecticides, dyes, perfumes, rope, to mats and cleaning products. Herbs also have religious significance and are used in alternative healing and aromatherapy.

