

Green Teen

Gardening is good for teens: it is a proven stress reliever, it helps clear the head, it is an excellent source of fresh food and it can serve as a great form of exercise. However, as you have already learned time and time again in your parenting career, educating your teen about the benefits of gardening is unlikely to result in an overall-wearing, shovel-wielding farmer of tomorrow.

Just like adults, teens' interests are wonderfully diverse; what appeals to one teen will be seen as totally lame by another. You might be a parent of a teen who loves to garden, or perhaps junior hasn't yet discovered his green thumb. While gardening isn't the trendiest hobby amongst today's teens, it is actually a truly broad hobby with elements that can appeal to almost anyone - even teenagers! If you'd like to nudge your youth towards the soil, try prodding his interest by selling a feature of gardening that suits him best.



- Do you have a book worm in your home? She might enjoy agriculture themed books or studying the variety in seed catalogues.
- A hands-on kid might enjoy building a raised flower bed.
- Your young activist might enjoy the idea of planting food for the purpose of donating to your local food bank.
- With endless possibility for creativity, a garden can offer a creative teen a chance to be expressive.
- Does your teen have a passion for the environment? Link gardening to environmental issues.
- Is it tough to pry your social butterfly away from her friends? Consider how friends could be included.
- A teen with a competitive spirit might be convinced to get digging if challenged to grow the biggest pumpkin, tallest sunflower or most bountiful potato hill.

Engaging your teen in gardening, whether it be a few small pots on the front step or several acres, has powerful physical and mental health benefits. It may take some clever thinking on your part, but if you're successful in recruiting them into the soil, the reward is huge and can last a lifetime.

Health Hazards of Hookah

We all know that smoking a cigarette or a cigar comes with health risks but what about products like hookah, which often is viewed as being a safer alternative?

Traditional hookah is a mix of tobacco, glycerin and/or honey. Smoke from hookah has been linked to diseases that are usually seen when you smoke cigarettes, such as cancer, heart disease, lung disease, and complications in pregnancy. Burning hookah, including hookah that is tobacco-free, still creates cancer causing chemicals. That means that people who are around the hookah smoke, including those who work in hookah bars, are at risk of health problems seen from being exposed to the second-hand smoke.

A lot of people believe that hookah is safer than using other tobacco products because of the water in the base of the pipe. Again, research tells us that this isn't true. The water doesn't act as a filter. In fact, the World Health Organization found that a hookah user may inhale as much smoke in a 1-hour sessions as someone who inhaled 100 or more cigarettes!

Another concern is about sharing the mouthpiece and germs. Diseases like herpes and other communicable diseases can be spread because people are sharing the same mouthpiece.

As with anything that poses a health risk, talking to kids and teens about hookah is important. For more information and support visit: www.albertaquits.ca