

## What is Dementia: Understand Together?

Dementia: Understand Together is a public support, awareness and information campaign led by the HSE, working with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Genio and supported by more than 30 partners from across Ireland. It aims to inspire people from all sections of society to stand together with the 500,000 Irish people whose families have been affected by dementia.

## Get involved

Everyone can make a difference by taking small steps to create understanding and inclusive communities where people with dementia are respected, supported and connected.

For more information about the campaign, information about dementia, supports and services, training and resources and how you can get involved visit [www.understandtogether.ie](http://www.understandtogether.ie) or Freephone 1800 341 341.

## Bloom Dementia Friendly Garden Team

The team that designed the garden is a collaboration between Newtown Saunders Ltd., TrinityHaus and Sonas apc. People with dementia and their carers supported the design and development of the garden.

**Newton Saunders Ltd (NSL)** is a longstanding design, build and maintenance landscaping company that has been supported by Enterprise Ireland to develop dementia friendly garden concepts, products and services.

([www.newtownsaunders.ie](http://www.newtownsaunders.ie) / 086 833 7512)

**TrinityHaus Research Centre** provides innovative solutions for buildings, neighbourhoods and cities. Focusing on people-centred design, TrinityHaus is currently involved in a range of age-friendly and dementia friendly research projects.

([www.trinityhaus.tcd.ie](http://www.trinityhaus.tcd.ie) / 01 896 3802)

**Sonas apc** provides training, resources and supports people with dementia and their carers, continually exploring new ways to upskill carers and enhance quality of life for people living with dementia.

([www.sonasapc.ie](http://www.sonasapc.ie) / 01 260 8138)

## People's Choice Award

Vote for us for the People's Choice Award by texting 'Garden 9' to 51500

# About dementia

Dementia describes a range of symptoms caused by diseases of the brain affecting multiple brain functions. Common symptoms may include difficulties with thinking and language, problem solving and carrying out everyday tasks, memory loss and changes in mood and behaviour.

Common causes of dementia include Alzheimer's Disease and vascular dementia which are caused by conditions that affect blood circulation to the brain.

Although the risk of dementia increases as you age, it is important to remember that the vast majority of older people do not get dementia.

## Gardening and dementia

There is good evidence that gardens and gardening can be particularly beneficial for people living with dementia.

When outdoor spaces are welcoming and accessible, people with dementia and their carers have positive interactions, facilitating them to maintain their independence and engage in meaningful occupation as well as enhancing their health and wellbeing.

## Taking care of your brain

There is growing evidence that keeping socially engaged and learning new skills or hobbies, as well as exercising regularly, not smoking, eating healthily, reducing alcohol intake and controlling high blood pressure, can potentially reduce the risk of dementia.

Challenging the brain through crosswords, Sudoku and word searches may also be helpful in maintaining good brain health.

# dementia

under stand together

# Moments in Time Garden



THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND



## Creating a dementia friendly garden at home

A garden that is dementia friendly supports the needs of a person with dementia, and makes it easier to go outdoors, get fresh air, do outdoor activities, and socialise with family and friends.

The Dementia: Understand Together garden demonstrates key dementia friendly garden design principles that anyone can incorporate to transform their outdoor space into somewhere that everyone can enjoy.

## Here are a few tips to get started

- 1 Getting around** – try to ensure that your garden is easy to access and has a straightforward layout. Paths and patios should be level, non-slip and a single colour. Provide handrails to support mobility and include raised planters to make gardening easier.
- 2 Planting** – choose plants that stir the senses with vibrant colours, beautiful scents and that are interesting to touch, as well as those that are well-known and stimulate fond memories. We recommend:
  - Hydrangea
  - Carnations
  - English lavender
  - Japanese maple
  - Ox eye daisy
- 3 Familiar features** – make the garden personal and include items in the garden that connect with the person's past, for example, a vegetable patch, a bird table, a fish pond or a water feature.
- 4 Opportunity to relax** – provide shelter and seating in the garden so that a person has the opportunity to sit back, take it all in and enjoy time out with family and friends.
- 5 Easy to potter** – store gardening tools and equipment in a location that's easy to find and access.

A full planting list and detailed information on the garden design is available at [www.understandtogether.ie/bloom](http://www.understandtogether.ie/bloom)

## Moments in time - the Dementia: Understand Together Garden

The garden provides a calm, relaxing place for people to spend time together in the outdoors. The short walk around the garden provides a gentle multi-sensory experience aimed at slowly grounding the person in the 'here and now'. There are more than 30 types of plants, flowers and shrubs, including fragrant lemon thyme and lavender, rustling wild grasses, vibrant hydrangeas, bright daisies and visually striking forest ferns.

The garden also includes a series of photographs showing the rich and varied nature of family and community life in Ireland. They are a reminder that a person with dementia is, first and foremost, a person, and that it's important to support the person to continue to be involved in family life and the activities that they enjoy.

