

YOUR GARDEN

Growing Good Exercise Habits

(NAPSA)—Crowded gyms and countless hours on a treadmill may be one way to exercise, but wouldn't enjoying sunshine and fresh air while spending time with your family be more fun? Well, here's a little insider tip gardening enthusiasts have known for ages—gardening is great exercise.

"All the digging, lifting, pulling and twisting that happens as you garden in your backyard or even in smaller container gardens uses major muscle groups and helps you stay in shape," stated Charlie Nardozzi, chief gardening officer consultant for Hilton Garden Inn hotels. "It makes perfect sense. Turning compost is a great alternative to weight lifting. Raking simulates the exact motions of a rowing machine. Mowing the lawn is comparable to walking or jogging on the treadmill. And, digging and shoveling are both aerobic and muscle building."

Studies performed at Stanford University Center for Research in Disease Prevention show that gardening provides light to moderate exercise. Depending on the activity, 30 minutes in the garden can burn the equivalent amount of calories as 30 minutes of light jogging. By exercising, you lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which may help prevent diabetes and heart disease and slow osteoporosis.

The health benefits of gardening are not limited to adults—for



children, gardening offers more than a reason to play in the dirt and some exercise. While gardening, school subjects, such as science, history, economics and language arts, come to life.

Teaching children the positive power of gardening, Nardozzi heads up the "Grow A School Garden" program developed jointly by the Hilton Garden Inn and National Garden Association. "The 'Grow A School Garden' project both incorporates academic subjects as well as teaches vital life lessons to children including cooperation, patience, persistence and responsibility. It is also a great way to get them to eat fruits and vegetables."

To find out more about the health benefits of gardening visit www.garden.org. For more information regarding the Hilton Garden Inn "Grow A School Garden" program, visit www.hiltongardeninn.com.