



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article      November 19, 2018

### Make a Connection Through Gardening

By Lydia Holley

There are comic strips portraying families all gathered together for the holidays, except each person is looking only at his or her phone. That is a sad commentary on contemporary life. According to Market Watch, American adults spend more than 11 hours per day staring at a screen; teenagers spend over 6 hours daily. Disorders like Snapchat dysmorphia are surfacing. Minds are so saturated, many dream at night of the computer games they play during the day. Programmers consider that a sign of success.



How can you connect with your loved ones this holiday season? There are several ways to get your family members off their phones. Take them all outside to gather plants for a centerpiece. Dry flowers from your garden and make potpourri. Let each one make a personalized terrarium.

A friend of mine plants pumpkin seeds each year on the fourth of July with her grandchildren. Later on, she sends them pictures of the blooms and of the pumpkins that have formed. They can choose to carve their pumpkin for Halloween, or use it to make pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. What a delicious tradition.

Dedicate an area in your garden for plants with names similar to your family member, or that portray their personality. For instance, you could plant an 'Olivia Rose Austin' rose for a child named Olivia, or just one that likes the color pink. Men could be bestowed with a 'Firefighter', 'Trumpeter', or 'Just Joey' rose. Of course, you do not have to use roses. Almost every plant has a common name that could be used for this purpose. Be certain to show them their special plant each time they visit. If they are still small, you may wish to plant a tree and compare their growth to the tree's each year.

You could also teach them that plants are useful. For instance, show them aloe vera's soothing qualities. Take them outside to gather rose hips for tea. Let them pick something from the vegetable garden to have with their meal. With a little bit of planning, you could get everyone off their phones and immersed into the wonder of nature. Perhaps then they would dream of growing plants instead of crushing candy.

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