

**An Integrative Approach to Therapeutic Outdoor
Spaces in Dementia-Care Units**

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(ABSTRACT)

There is an evident gap in the research regarding the environmental needs of older adults with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) and the design of therapeutic outdoor spaces for these persons. With the rapid growth of the aging population, appropriate outdoor spaces will become essential to improved quality of life for older adults with ADRD. This study explores nonpharmacological treatment approaches for persons with ADRD that can be facilitated in the outdoor environment.

The study presents an examination of the literature, including theoretical frameworks and treatment approaches, interviews with professionals in the fields of landscape architecture and gerontology, and an assessment of case studies. Design guidelines identify the necessary landscape elements that can be incorporated in outdoor environments to reduce maladaptive behaviors and improve positive affect and the overall quality of life for persons with dementia. This study concludes with an example of a prototypical wander garden design that responds to the design guidelines and addresses the physical and mental capabilities of persons with ADRD.