

## **Banishing the Blues**

By Sara Bonn

Winter doldrums coming on? Help is no further than the garden. While not a substitute for professional medical guidance, this exercise is a tool to assist in managing anxiety and depression.

### Five Senses Discovery

You will guide your mind into the present moment using your five senses. This distracts you from worries and gives you a chance to regain a more hopeful focus. Notice each of your senses in turn, spending a few moments appreciating each one.

Sound in the garden may come from the wind rustling brown leaves, bird song, and squirrels' chatter (as much as a gardener may want to repel them, squirrels are here for us now, since they don't hibernate). In some places you may even hear cracking ice!

There are many beautiful textures and tactile sensations available in the garden. Leaves, dry flower petals, plant stalks, soil, rocks, water, wind and sunshine are among the sensory attributes of any garden. Plants such as Lamb's Ears, Thistle, American Holly, or Rattlesnake Master have distinctive shapes and textures. But watch out for the cacti!

Smell in a winter garden may come from the sun warming the soil, or from the snow itself if you have some. Cedars and junipers are pungent evergreens that are popular landscape plants. Plant some crocuses for an early spring floral scent.

Winter fills the garden with browns, but look closely to find unexpected colors, such as inclusions of peach, blue, or translucent crystals in rocks, or a tiny rainbow in the reflection of sun off a wet leaf. Snow, while white in itself, refracts light into many different hues. Look for purples and blues at the bases of snow mounds, and tiny points of yellow and green shining from the top of the pile.

Happy Winter!