

The Telegraph

Are young people really 'hooked on gardening'?

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Date: 13th August 2014

A survey suggests that far from being addicted to their smartphones, 25-35 year olds are rolling up their sleeves and getting in the garden



It's cool to compost: a survey suggests that the young are increasingly embracing gardening Photo: Alamy

It's often said that young people are more interested in smartphones and videogames than the outside world – but new research suggests that twenty and thirty-somethings are just as likely to be found harvesting tomatoes in the garden as on Twitter.

A survey found that the average 25-35 year old spends 12 to 15 hours in their garden each month, with the average couple set to spend £518 this summer on their garden – a significant rise from the previous year, when £273 was the norm.

Twenty-three per cent of adults surveyed also said that they thought time spent outdoors was more fulfilling than time spent watching television or films.

Experts at Alfresia, the furniture provider which commissioned the survey, attributed the increasing popularity of gardening to television shows such as ITV's Love Your Garden and the BBC's The Big Allotment Challenge, which has been dubbed the horticultural equivalent of The Great British Bake Off.

Craig Corbett, product director at Alfresia, said: "More and more young people are choosing to invest in their gardens to provide a place where friends and family can spend quality time together.

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Young people are increasingly eager to cultivate their own creative and social space in which to relax within the boundaries of their own home.”

Gardener and writer Lia Leendertz said: "I very much see a rise in young people getting interested in gardening, and it's a joy. They are generally a pretty alternative, left-leaning crowd, intensely interested in the politics of food production, in the mechanisms of the chemical industry and what they mean for the wider world. There are more community gardening initiatives than ever before and this is allowing people without access to gardens to start getting their hands dirty and learn about plants. I think it's an organic, productive, social and socially aware form of gardening that is most capturing younger gardeners' imaginations."

Not everyone is convinced that gardening is a growing trend, however. Alan Titchmarsh, the veteran gardener and TV presenter, has spoken several times about his fears that the young are ignorant of the natural world, and that few consider horticultural careers

“The more children and young people are divorced from the great outdoors the more fearful they become of it, the less understanding they have of the world outdoors,” **he told the Telegraph** earlier this year. “And the planet then is in very shaky hands.”

Link: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/11031825/Are-young-people-really-hooked-on-gardening.html>