# "I used to be a gardener"

Communal gardens as conduits for Aged Care residents to activity, identity and to others.

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## Today

- Theory
- Method
- Results
- Implications

A sense of (gardening) self Finding meaning

Conclusions





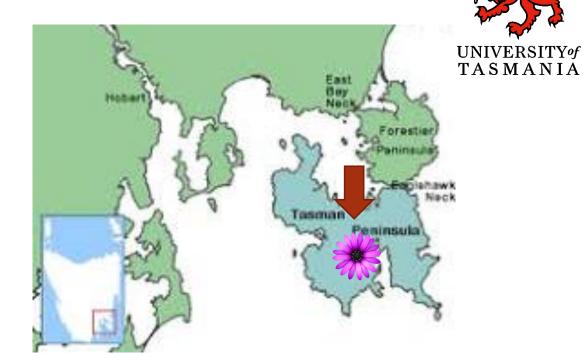
## Theoretical Framework

Therapeutic Horticulture and Therapeutic Landscapes



## Participants

Role	Description	No.
Staff	Various roles	4
Residents	Mixed levels of cognitive capacity and past/ present interest in gardening	6
Volunteers	Elderly, involved in RACF and gardening	2
Family members	Kin to RACF resident, keen gardener	1
	Total	13



### Methods

- Phenomenological qualitative enquiry
- Dementia inclusive
- Process consent (Jan Dewing)
- Thematic analysis

## Results:

## Six Themes

- Gardening
- Being outdoors
- Socialising
- Perceptions of risk
- Independence and support
- Gardening identities







## A sense of (Gardening) Self



I mean, if I was well I could help in the garden. But if I was well I wouldn't be here. It's as simple as that.

Resident

I was very upset when I couldn't garden, when I wasn't well enough. I was very upset, but now I've accepted it and I've gone onto sewing.

Resident



## Finding Meaning

- Connecting with nature, plants and the outside world
- Being,døing,contributing



If it's just a shrub and it doesn't produce a flower it's not interesting. You want something where they can say, "ok let's go out and smell it, eat it", or something like that.



## Why go out when you can stay in?



#### Why stay in:

- Boring garden design
- Limited physical and cognitive capacity (or perceptions of...)
- No support from volunteers, staff and family
- Rules

## Why go out:

- Physical and emotional therapy
- Maintaining identity
- Risk taking like a human
- Access to the outside world and interesting others



#### Look out for:

Companion Planting: A guide to creating dementia inclusive community gardens.

DIGnity Supported Community Gardening www.dignitygardening.com

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