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## New England Botanic Garden breaks down barriers to growing

BY DEVIN BATES | WORCESTER

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BOYLSTON, Mass. — As the calendar flips to April, rainy weather didn't hesitate in making an appearance on Saturday.

While there wasn't much outdoor recreation to be had, the New England Botanic Garden invited folks inside to spread the joy of growing to everyone, regardless of ability.

Staff hopes the program results in more people seeing the benefits of growing

Whether you live in a tight space or have trouble getting around, square foot gardening can be a powerful tool for saving time, space and water.

Humanitarian groups around the world use the method to maximize efforts to end hunger and poverty.

At Saturday's square foot gardening class, students learned how to grow more with less.

"There's food deficits, so anything that you can grow and have a surplus, take to your local food pantry," said student Karen McEachern. "It's interconnectedness if you've got kids or other people you want to bring along on the journey."

McEachern is an experienced gardener, taking after her mother, who showed her how to plant perennials when she was eight years old.

She wanted to learn more about the savvy strategy of square foot gardening because it's also an excellent way to save your body from the wear and tear of a traditional garden.

"If you've broken a shoulder or a knee or a wrist or anything else, it's terrific physical therapy to get you on the road to recovery as well as mental therapy," McEachern said.

Square foot gardening costs 50% less, uses 20% less space, 10% of the water, and 2% of the work compared to single row gardening.

Staff NEBG believe the biggest benefit to be had is the peace of mind it can bring to those who otherwise wouldn't have picked up the trowel.

"There's been research that shows that plants can increase people's relaxation, help reduce blood pressure," said Suzi Fonda, adult education manager. "We're trying to do those programs in order to get people to come and see the garden as a place to come and relax and bring it home to their own gardens."

To find the next square foot gardening class or find other classes to hone your planting skills, visit the New England Botanic Garden [calendar](#).