

THE FRONT PORCH

All the happy happenings at Cotton Grove Estate



IN THIS ISSUE

**HOW TO REDUCE DEMENTIA
AGITATION: CREATING A
CALM ENVIRONMENT FOR
OLDER ADULTS**

FARM-TO-TABLE PROGRAM

**CHRISTMAS AT COTTON
GROVE**

NOVEMBER PHOTO DUMP

A MESSAGE FROM ANNA

How to Reduce Dementia Agitation: Creating a Calm Environment for Older Adults

Seniors with Alzheimer's disease or dementia are often highly sensitive to their environment. Thus, creating a soothing place for them to live helps minimize agitation, reduce challenging behaviors, and improve quality of life.

There are a number of factors you should consider when creating the perfect environment for a person living with Alzheimer's or dementia, or when visiting potential senior living facilities for your older adult.

For people living with dementia, a relaxing environment is incredibly important to help minimize confusion and agitation, in turn, helping them feel calm and able to concentrate. So this component should not be overlooked when it comes to their care.

Fortunately, there are an array of ways to modify your senior's home environment in order to make it a relaxing haven for someone with dementia.



It is also important to **make careful decisions when decorating**, as some home furnishings can unwittingly cause distress for people living with dementia.

For example, they may mistake their own reflection in a mirror for that of a stranger watching them, which is a very frightening experience.

There are two good remedies for this problem: either remove mirrors from the common areas in your home, or cover them with a roller blind that can be pulled down when the mirror is not in use.

Mirror-like effects can also be created by street lights on the window at night, causing reflections to be seen.

These can easily be interpreted by a person living with dementia as a stranger looking through the window, causing them to feel frightened and agitated. As soon as the sun goes down, make sure to draw the curtains to avoid this happening.

Finally, take caution when choosing paint colors in a room by ensuring that the walls and floors are contrasting colors. The definition between them will help prevent a person with dementia from getting lost or falling.

To begin with, it helps to **reduce unnecessary noise**, which can cause undue stress. To accomplish this, introduce noise absorbing materials and soft furnishings, like carpets and curtains.

Similarly, if outdoor noise becomes too much for a person living with dementia, make an effort to keep your windows shut. If possible, double glazing should be installed to reduce outside noise even further.

However, silence can also be disorienting to those with dementia. Therefore, gentle and soft background noise can be calming. Try a familiar radio station with low music and gentle chatter.



Lighting is also incredibly important, as people with dementia are typically older, and so may be struggling with their eyesight. Thus, it is integral to ensure that items are easily visible.

Keep all rooms well lit. Use natural light as much as possible, but where electrical lights must be used, make sure the bulbs are high wattage.

Also, pay attention to the positioning of lamps, overhead lights, etc, as pools of light and darkness may agitate or frighten a person with dementia. Shadows can be misinterpreted as something or someone threatening, leading a person with dementia to feel distressed and scared.



For someone who is living with dementia, losing things can be quite stressful, so it's a good idea to **ensure that frequently used items are easy to find and within reaching distance**.

For example, you can place stickers on the cupboards, listing what can be found within them. Or, replace cupboard doors with glass doors so all the items inside can be seen.

This will encourage a person with dementia to maintain their independence when possible, and help eliminate any stress they may feel while looking for something.

You may also want to **create a calming retreat** for your older adult. Whether a person with dementia is living in a care home or with the family, it is important that they have a place to retreat to when they are feeling stressed or anxious.

This doesn't need to be a large area; it could be a comfy chair and a small table. It simply needs to be a calming place, separate to the hubbub of the rest of the house, where they can relax and perhaps do soothing activities, like painting or a dementia jigsaw puzzles.

Farm-to-Table Program

The entire team at Cotton Grove Estate is excited to mark the beginning of our new "Farm-to-Table" program, with the arrival of a few fluffy new feathered friends.

Ms. Mini Pearl and her adorable chicks, pictured right, will soon be supplying our kitchens with fresh organic eggs each day, which our residents will have the pleasure of enjoying.

We would like to extend a heartfelt 'thank you' to Miss Stacie Washburn, one of our wonderful caregivers, for taking on the responsibility of caring for our new brood.

We are tremendously grateful that Miss Stacie has agreed to share her knowledge and know-how with us! She also donated Mini Pearl and her chicks to the estate to get our program started on the right foot. Thank you so very much, Miss Stacie!



Christmas at Cotton Grove

Our residents will be celebrating Christmas just as they would at home, with a delicious meal, presents, carols, and homemade goodies.

You are more than welcome to join us for the festivities!

However, if you would prefer to take a family member out for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, that is encouraged, as well.

Please call the estate as soon as possible to notify us of your plans so that we might formalize our own.





Mr. Art lookin' smart



Gardening fun



The beautiful Miss Lillian Crews



Late night snacks are good for the soul



A Message From Anna

Dear family and friends,

What a wonderful Thanksgiving meal we had out at Cotton Grove this year! It was lovely to see those of you who were able to stop by, and of course, those of you who weren't able to be with us in person were very much present in spirit!

This certainly is a season for celebration. As I'm sure you've gathered by now, holidays are a big deal around here, and Christmas is one of our favorites. We've been getting in the spirit with carols and crafts and cookie decorating, and we are all quite excited for the coming celebration of Jesus' birth. What a lovely time of year it is!

If I do not have the opportunity to tell you in person this month, I want to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas! I pray that your holidays are full of all the good stuff - family, friends, food, laughter, and warmth - and that we all remember to hold in the forefront of our minds the true reason for this bright and magical season.

Warmly,

Anna Pittard
Owner, Cotton Grove Estate
(912) 424-6422

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ANNA JONES PITTARD
OWNER, COTTON GROVE ESTATE