

“But it is important to remember the many health and wellbeing benefits of gardening and the way in which community gardening can pull people together and change lives for the better.”

He added: “Increasingly research is showing that gardening relaxes us, eases stress, provides exercise and improves psychological well-being.”

Kirsty Willson, herbaceous supervisor at Edinburgh’s Royal Botanic Gardens, also did not fear being replaced by a machine any time soon.

The Royal Botanic Gardens is currently trialling an automatic lawn mower which can trim grass without a human operator sweating behind the controls, and can even be programmed to start and finish work on its own.

Ms Wilson, who has watched the auto-mower in action, believes that while technology can help, a garden will always need a human touch.

“It seems a very interesting idea and we’re always interested in new technology which can save us time and effort,” she said.

“But while this might be useful for pruning back branches or trimming verges, there are always going to be things which need the hands of a trained horticulturalist.”

The flower specialist added that using a robot to tend the garden also prevented people from the benefits of going outside and “getting their hands in the soil”.

She said: “We all love being one with nature and working with plants, and gardening has proven to have benefits to both mental and physical health for those who take part.

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