



LIFELONG GARDENING

Basic Tool Considerations

1. Use lightweight, ergonomically designed tools; this means tools that work with you to minimize fatigue and discomfort. Note: some more durable tools can be heavier in weight.
2. Use longer handled tools to reach into garden beds and decrease bending. Choose lighter, long-handled tools to avoid excess weight.
3. Use smaller tool ends to reduce the weight of the tool. This will also reduce the force to move through or lift the soil.
4. Use two hands to do the job, if possible; for example, use a lopper instead of a one-handed pruner.
5. Store tools close to the garden to avoid carrying long distances and to eliminate extra trips to the storage area.
6. Transport tools and equipment in a two-wheeled cart as opposed to a wheelbarrow or heavy container, resulting in less strain on your back.
7. Keep tools (hoes, shovels, pruners, etc.) sharp to reduce the effort and strain when using them.

Plant Selection

1. Choose plants that grow naturally in your area and adapt to your climate and soil. Also match plant needs to the area planted (dry/wet, sun/shade, and space available); doing so will require less care.
2. Generally, shrubs require less maintenance than perennial flowers; however, avoid shrubs that bloom only on new wood and require annual pruning. Perennial flowers usually require less maintenance than annuals. Grasses generally require little care once established, but avoid invasive grasses.
3. Use groundcover plants or mulch to reduce the need for weeding.
4. Use annuals, which have a shallower root system than perennials, when planting in a container that does not hold a large amount of soil.
5. Avoid plants that:
 - need dividing each year or two to remain healthy and flowering;
 - require staking to remain upright;
 - need deadheading to continue to flower;
 - go to seed; requiring removal each spring;
 - are disease and pest prone;
 - are not cold hardy for our area (exception would be annuals);
 - require pinching to develop/maintain shape;
 - have a short bloom time;
 - provide food for wildlife;
 - spread rapidly and require pulling or digging up to maintain;
 - are short-lived.

Equipment – Enabling Tools for Gardening

Garden tools today are being made with lighter materials and many are designed to be ergonomic. This ergonomic design helps to compensate for repetitive motions and alleviates the stress caused by lifting, pushing, bending, and digging when performing gardening activities. The newer enlarged, cushioned grips and/or telescoping handles also promote less stress on muscles and joints.

Tools are available for purchase in hardware stores, garden centers, mail order catalogs, and on the Internet.

Websites and Catalogs

You can find information on the Internet by searching words such as: enabling gardening; accessible gardening; gardening with disabilities; gardening with arthritis; and vertical gardening.

Some Internet sites that we have found useful include:

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| arthritis.org | lehmans.com |
| agrability.missouri.edu/gardenweb | lifewithease.com |
| chicagobotanic.org/therapy/resources | motherearthnews.com |
| circlehoe.com | oxo.com |
| cleanairgardening.com | peta-uk.com |
| elevatedgardening.com | plowandhearth.com |
| ergonica.com | radiusgarden.com |
| gardeners.com | stokeseeds.com |
| gardeningwithease.com | thewright-stuff.com |
| gardeningwithease.com | 2vertex.com |
| leevalley.com | verticalgardeninstitute.org |

This list is not inclusive and in no way represents endorsements of these products or retailers; it is intended only to provide a service to people interested in accessible gardening.

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Publications and Reference Books



University of Wisconsin Extension Publications can be downloaded and/or ordered from their website at Learningstore.uwex.edu

- A3110 Disease-Resistant Vegetables for the Home Garden
- A3382 Container Gardening
- A3383 Mulches for Home Gardens and Plantings
- A3384 Specialized Gardening Techniques: Wide-Row Planting, Square-Foot Gardening and Raised Beds

REFERENCE BOOKS

Adil, Janeen R. (1994) *Accessible Gardening for People with Disabilities: A Guide to Methods, Tools and Plants.*

Woy, Joann (1997). *Accessible Gardening: Tips & Techniques for Seniors & the Disabled.*

Morrison, Susan & Sweet, Rebecca (2011). *Garden Up! Smart Vertical Gardening for Small and Large Spaces.*

Eddison, Sydney (2010). *Gardening for a Lifetime: How to Garden Wiser as You Grow Older.*

Lanza, Patricia (1998). *Lasagna Gardening.*

Moss-Sprague, Mary (2012). *Stand Up and Garden: The No-Digging, No-Tilling, No-Stooping Approach to Growing Vegetables and Herbs.*

Youmans, Kathleen (1992). *The Able Gardener: Overcoming Barriers of Age and Physical Limitations.*

Cassidy, Patty (2012). *The Age-Proof Garden.*

Rothert, Gene (1994). *The Enabling Garden: Creating Barrier Free Gardens.*

Cassidy, Patty (2011). *The Illustrated Practical Guide to Gardening for Seniors.*

Easton, Valerie (2009). *The NEW Low-Maintenance Garden.*

Blanc, Patrick (2008). *The Vertical Garden: From Nature to the City.*

Fell, Derek (2011). *Vertical Gardening: Grow Up, Not Out, for More Vegetables and Flowers in Much Less Space.*

Lambertini, A. (2007). *Vertical Gardens.*

McCreary, Rosemary; photographs William Holt (2006). *Tabletop Gardens.*

McLaughlin, Chris (2013). *Vertical Vegetable Gardening.*

The Chicago Botanic Garden – *Garden for Life* publications, and visit their Enabling Garden!

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