

Gardening With Arthritis

Agricultural Engineering Extension: Karen Funkenbusch, MA, and Willard Downs, Ph.D. University of Missouri-Columbia, Department of Physical Therapy School of Health Professions, in the School of Medicine: Marion Minor, Ph.D., PT.

Arthritis is one of the most common diseases affecting adults in America today. Gardening can be an excellent treatment for this painful and often debilitating disease. People who have arthritis and garden maintain better flexibility in their joints, a larger range of motion and a enjoy better quality of life than what they did before taking up this calming hobby. As with any activity, there are a few basic tips and techniques that can allow you to better enjoy your time spent gardening:

- Warm up your joints before beginning to garden, do some light stretching to reduce soreness later on.
- Keep tools and watering sources near your garden to cut down on extra steps and conserve your energy.
- Garden at times when you feel the strongest.
- Employ the use of raised beds or container gardens.
- Use proper tools and keep them in good condition.
- Use the largest muscle group possible to complete a task, for example, when carrying a bag of tools, place the bag on your forearm and let the large muscles of your arm do the work instead of carrying it with your hand.
- Pace yourself.
- Use a stool or kneepad when working on or near the ground to protect your knees.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands.
- Change positions frequently to avoid becoming stiff.

For additional information contact your local Outreach and Extension Service or the University of Missouri-Columbia, 1.800.995.8503.

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