

Tips for Easier Gardening

Agricultural Engineering Extension: Karen Funkenbusch, MA, and Willard Downs, Ph.D.

If you have limited strength, mobility, or trouble getting around the garden, try some of the following tips for easier gardening.

- Put hanging baskets on pulleys so that they can be easily lowered for maintenance.
- When possible use lightweight pots for the patio or balcony. If using clay try having them set on a platform with wheels so that you can easily move them around when needed.
- If you have a large garden and are always forgetting things, try getting a few inexpensive tools and putting them in a plastic-type container (safe from the elements) near the bottom of the garden. This will save steps and allow you to prune and weed as you go.
- Try using a mailbox to hold small hand tools. There are great decorative mailboxes on the market that will add charm to the garden.
- Place stools, garden chairs or benches in the garden so that you can rest often.
- You can buy a garden cart to carry long handled tools but a plastic garbage pail on wheels works just as well and is somewhat cheaper. The wheels are adjustable on the back so they will stay in one place when you park it. The tools are where you need them and they don't fall.
- If your arms and hands are weak, use lightweight tools. There are many sturdy tools on the market, look for the ones made from nylon reinforced with fiberglass that is virtually indestructible.
- Hand tools with larger grip are easier to hang on to. You can enlarge or soften the handle by adding foam or a bicycle grip.
- Gloves are also good for griping, particularly when they have a ribbed surface.
- Have a hose holder part way into the garden so you don't have to carry it the entire way.
- Paint the ends of wooden handles a bright color so that when you drop them in the garden they are easy to see.
- Keep garden tools sharp to reduce the effort required doing the job.

Vary your tasks. A full day of pruning will give any gardener blisters. Remember it's not a race.

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

This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), U. S. Department of Agriculture under special project number 2001-41590-01143 and the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research under special project number H133B980022.

University Outreach and Extension does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or status as a Vietnam-era veteran in employment or programs.

