

Garden Smart...Garden Easy...

Keep the Fun in Gardening - Coping with Physical Limitations



Accessible Gardening means gardening that is *“suitable or adapted for people with physical challenges.”* These challenges can be a variety and range of limitations, some of which may be vision, mobility, flexibility, chronic pain, or emotional stress. Simple adjustments may be all that are necessary to help a gardener reap the joys and physical and emotional benefits of gardening.

Consult your physician if necessary—Depending on the severity of your physical limitations, you may need to consult your physician to make sure the activities you want to do are right for you. Ask for warm-up exercises or stretches to loosen up joints and muscles.

Evaluate your situation and establish your goals—It may be easy to modify your current activities. Develop your plan—keep it simple—and go for it! Above all, stay positive and enthusiastic.

Research—A little research goes a long way. Books, magazines and websites are available to help you make your plans. Discuss your ideas with other gardeners.

Changes of gardening style—Some changes might include gardening in a smaller area and limiting the variety of plants, working with raised beds, containers and table gardening. Take it slowly. You don’t have to make major changes initially.

Adapt your plant selection to accommodate limitations of vision as well as mobility. Fragrant and colorful plants can aid a visually impaired gardener. Someone in a wheelchair can still garden with the appropriate modification of pathways and ease of access to water and tools.

Specially designed tools - Many tools are designed to ease the strain and discomfort of routine gardening activities, such as kneeling, cutting, grasping, lifting, pulling and pushing. Evaluate the tools you currently use—often, they can be easily and economically adapted to fit your needs. Good sources for tools are local garden centers and garden catalogs.

Master Gardeners of Sussex County—Master Gardeners share their knowledge and experience with the public through workshops, fact sheets, a speakers’ bureau, a garden help line and a demonstration garden. For more information visit our website at <http://rec.udel.edu/Extension/MasterGardeners/index.html> or call us at (302) 856-2585, ext. 535.



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