

Gardening for All: **Tips and Tools for Easier Gardening**

Presented by

Jessica Sullivan

UF IFAS Extension Osceola County

Overview

-Tips for designing and adapting your garden to reduce maintenance

-Tools and techniques to prevent pain and injury



Why Adapt Your Landscape or Garden?

Because gardening can hurt us!

- Lifting
- Bending
- Kneeling
- Twisting
- Reaching
- Jarring movements



Common Gardening Injuries

- Neck strain
- Lower back strain
- Rotator cuff tears
- Tendonitis - shoulder, wrist, thumb
- Lateral epicondylitis (“tennis elbow”)
- Carpal tunnel syndrome -wrist
- De Quervains tenosynovitis - thumb
- Chronic ulnar collateral ligament injury -thumb
- Pre-patellar bursitis (“burst knee”)



**How can I design for easier
landscape and garden care?**

You can garden anywhere...



Landscapes...

Use solid edging around plant beds

Reduces weeds



Plant Densely

- Reduces weeds



Plant Perennials in Plant Beds

- Less replanting



Vegetable / herb gardens...

Raised Beds



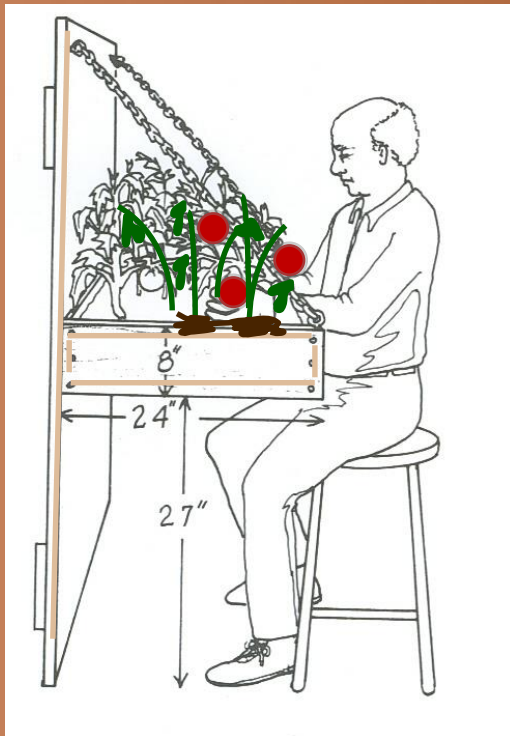
Get your garden off the ground!

- Raised beds-
 - reduce weeding
 - can save your back



Raised beds

- Materials: concrete block, plastic/composite “lumber”
- Standing or sitting?
- Width <4 ft. Height 2 ft.







Tools for raised beds

- Depends on bed height



Container Gardening







Container gardening tips

- Give roots plenty of space
- Use drained containers
- Metal, wood not ideal
- No saucers
- Best soil mix: ??





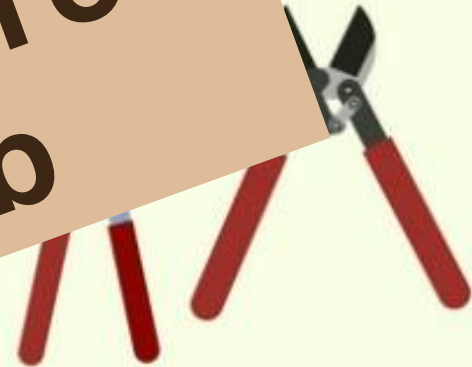
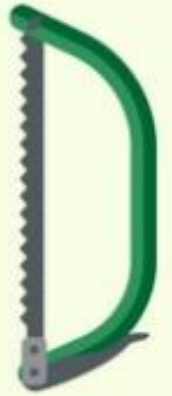


The ultimate low-maintenance landscape may not really be a landscape...

Hardscaping + Trees +
Raised beds, containers, wall boxes,
window boxes, hanging baskets...







**Use the Right Tool
for the Job**

Know your tools

Moving mulch

Mixing in
compost

Digging
potatoes

Moving
gravel

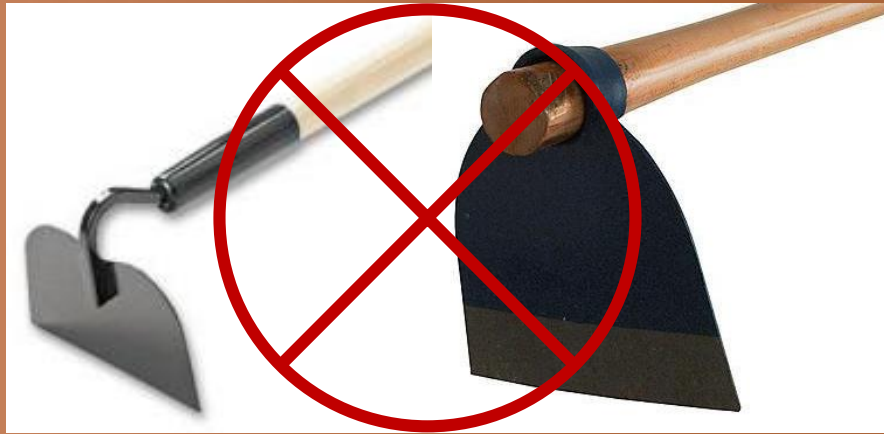
Trenching

Planting shrubs

Digging in roots



Know your tools



Light weeding



Know your tools- pruners

- Hand pruners
- Saws
- Loppers

- Tools with arm support
- Braces / Grip aids
- Adaptive handles for leverage



Stand-up Garden Seeder (PVC pipe + kitchen funnel)



Working at ground level

- Garden Kneelers
- Chairs
- Stability?



Easier Irrigation

- Coil or expanding hoses
- Tree bags
- Micro-irrigation systems
 - Use a timer!!





**Use the
Right Gardening
Techniques for the Job**

Reduce the physical stress of gardening...

- Alternate activities
- Alternate standing stance
- Sit and hydrate in shade frequently!

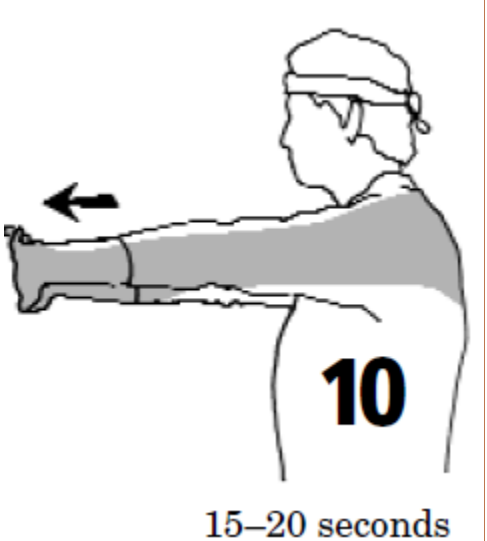
Tips-

- Bring your water with you
- Set a timer!



Reduce the physical stress of gardening...

Stretch before and after gardening



Reducing strain on Hands, Wrists, and Arms

- Use tools with right size handle/gripping pattern for YOUR hand
- Keep wrist straight
 - Use adaptive tools or handles if needed



Reduce back strain

- Use long-handled cultivators, rakes and hoes (~57"+)
- Use push-pull motion (not chopping)



Reduce back strain

- Use wide stance when raking, cultivating, hoeing, shoveling
- Keep back straight
- Move with your knees



Digging

- Use digging tools with wide foot support
- Keep digging shovels sharp
- Wide stance, straight back when lifting



Reducing back strain

- Use 4-wheel garden cart
- Don't overload carts





Gardening with Vision Impairments

Gardening with low vision / blindness

- Keep tools together and easy to move
- Use a tactile grid on garden beds
- Keep a small weatherproof radio on while working to help locate starting point



Use tactile spacers for seeding, making rows



Gardening with low vision / blindness

- Walking surfaces should be even, provide traction
- Use plants with scent, taste, tactile interest
- Yellow/white/blue easier to see (pots, flowers, bed edges, tool handles, etc.)
- Use rope as a guide to garden areas



Wear the Right Gardening Gear for the Job



A little dirt never hurt anyone? Protect yourself!

- **Fungi**
 - Sporotrichosis...
- **Bacteria**
 - Tetanus...
- **Parasitic worms**
 - Hookworm...
- **Parasitic protozoa**
 - Giardiasis...





Hats

- Light-colored
- Wide brim
- Shades neck
- Breathable
- Washable



Eye Protection

- UV Sun Protection
- Safety glasses - pruning, weed-eating, working around shrub beds
- Sealed safety glasses - working with mulch, sawdust
- Anti-fog helpful



Clothing

- Sun protection
- Insect protection
- Protection from scratches, scrapes
- Quick-drying
- Stretchy



Gloves

- Shouldn't constrict movement or circulation!
- Should provide protection from scrapes, insects



Shoes

- Should provide:
 - Insect protection
 - Proper soles if digging
 - Arch support
 - Good traction



Protect yourself from infections

- Keep animals out of vegetable gardens
- Wash produce before eating it
- Don't use water from rain barrels on vegetables
- Wear the right gear



Summary

Keep gardening fun and safe:

- **Design** your landscape for easier maintenance
- **Use raised beds and containers** for annual vegetables and flowers
- **Stretch** before and after gardening
- **Use better tools and techniques** to prevent injury and make gardening easier
- **Wear the right garden gear** to protect from sun, insects and scrapes