

Gardening can be a fun activity for everyone, regardless of age or ability. Accessible gardening is designed to be as inclusive as possible, focusing on different types of gardens that can be adapted to a person's ability and comfort level. In addition, more user-friendly tools increase safety through ergonomics, which looks at how to do a task in the safest and most efficient way.

TYPES OF GARDENS

Raised Garden – Brings the garden up to a comfortable height for the user, built to any dimension and can be anywhere from six inches to waist height.

Vertical Garden – Takes bending and stooping out of gardening, putting most garden chores at eye level. The structure on which plants grow is extremely important – must be strong and anchored in the ground in order to support the plants.

Window Flower Box Garden – Small, convenient and easily placed outside a window for all-day enjoyment

Herb Garden – An easy way to have a fragrant, attractive garden; use them in cooking. Many herbs are perennials and will produce for years.

Sensory Garden – Goal of sensory gardens is to bring out the parts of a garden people can experience through their senses, including, but not limited to, plants, different walkway materials, fountains and chimes.

Container Garden – Takes away most digging, bending and kneeling by bringing the garden to you. Select containers one-third as tall as the plants you want to grow with one "good-sized" hole for every gallon of soil. The container garden is best for compact vegetables.

"Instant" Salad or Salsa Garden – Less mess and super easy. Buy a bag or two of potting soil, lay them on your patio, and cut an "X" in them. Then plant a tomato, pepper or other veggie, water them, and watch them grow.

ACCESSIBLE GARDENING TOOLS

Ergonomic Tools

- Curved handles allow for better wrist position and decrease stress on tendons and joints.
- Telescoping tools are small tools with long handles so work can be done without stooping.
- Pistol grips allow for better gripping and neutral wrist position.
- Ratcheting pruners make cutting easier and multiply strength.

Click Seeders – Use vibration to plant seeds.

Foam Tubing or Tape – Put around tool handles to give a wide and easier grip.

Large-Print Tools and Colored Tape – Make it easier for persons who are blind and visually impaired to view

Kneelers or Seats – Help with back pain, strength and endurance.

Add-on Handles – Maximize someone's lifting ability and minimizes the need to bend/stop.

Yard Carts – Make small-load hauling relatively easy and effortless; push or pull to get where you are going.

Handheld Video Magnifiers – Help persons read and identify text and images that convey important information about plant care.

Plant Snap App – Identify more than 600,000 types of plants with your smartphone and receive information and advice on how to care for your plants.

TIPS TO INCREASE GARDENING SAFETY

- Avoid excessive repetitions and force by switching hands routinely while working; get ratcheting tools.
- Use tools with larger and longer handles along with jar grippers and openers.
- Use knee pads and a two-step ladder for a place to sit and to aid in getting up and down.
- Paint handles of tools so they are easier to find and identify.