



Care Partner Information

Tips for Providing Older Adult Care

Gardening

It is important for older adults to stay active for as long as they can. This sheet describes how caregivers can help older adults stay active by gardening. These tips can be used at home, at a care facility, in a community garden, or other places that serve older adults.

Benefits of gardening



Gardening can be enjoyed by people of all ages. It is good for older adults because it is an activity they can do inside or outside.

Gardening uses all five senses: touch, sight, sound, smell and even taste. Use of these senses can help older adults feel more connected. This is also true for people with dementia. Watching a seed grow into a plant can add meaning to an older adult's day.

Gardening is also a good way for older adults to get exercise.

Digging, planting, weeding and watering can help a person move better. These activities can help with hand-eye coordination. They can also increase the amount of time the person is able to do other activities.

Older adults with arthritis, vision loss, and other challenges with aging can have fun gardening with some simple changes to tools and planters. These changes are described on the next page.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu

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A few changes to the garden can make it easier for older adults. For example, build garden boxes so older adults can reach the plants from a chair or wheelchair. Build the box so it is about 2 feet tall. Make sure the box is not too wide. A seated person should be able to reach the middle from both sides. The picture at right provides one example of how to build a garden box for older adults.

Ask at a local plant store about types of plants and garden beds that work best for the season and local climate.



Garden Tips
Choose plants that are easy to grow. If the older adult likes flowers, pick plants that flower. Or, they can grow a fruit or vegetable they like to eat.
Put chairs around the garden so it is easy to rest.
Make sure the path to the garden is wide, smooth and flat so that it is easy for older adults using walkers, canes or wheelchairs.

Tool tips

For some older adults, using garden hand tools can be hard. This can be fixed.

Tip	Why?	Trick
Use hand tools with large, soft grips.	These are easier to hold.	Plumbing foam can be cut and taped onto each grip.
Use tools that have colorful grips.	It makes it easier for people with vision loss to see them.	Use colored duct tape. Make each type of tool a different color. For example, make shovels red, and rakes yellow.

Reference

For more information, visit <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/accessible/>

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