

Old gardeners just go to seed

By Susan Stafford
Correspondent

Backache slowing you down? Arthritis flaring up? Worry not. Pick up your rake and head for the garden.

In the average lifetime, one in every five Americans will face either temporary or permanent disability. The ability to continue gardening as accustomed is either diminished or lost because of illness, accident or advancing age. I've had two rotator cuff repairs and I have arthritis in my hands and one knee, which directly impact my ability to garden like I used to.

Avid gardeners who are challenged by a myriad of physical problems now can choose from a wide variety of adaptive and assistive tools to ease the aches and pains that come with gardening as we age. Many of these tools are readily available online, by mail order or locally. With a few minor adaptations, you can convert your existing tools into more user-friendly equipment.

The most important consideration is for comfort and

ease of use choosing your tools. Provide a place for tool storage that is close to the garden or use a wheeled tool-storage cart. An old mailbox creatively decorated and placed in the garden is great for holding trowels, pruners, weeders and other small tools and supplies.

Use tools that make tasks easier and provide the least amount of stress on body parts. Modify your current favorite tools by building up handles to make them fatter and easier to grip. The addition of bicycle grips, foam, or pipe insulation wrap works really well. Longer handles can provide extended reach. One DIY method is to heat the appropriate length and diameter of PVC pipe to 235 degrees in the oven. Slide the pipe onto the handle of your tool and gently squeeze to create a firm grip. (BE CAREFUL – pipe will be hot.)

Small, lightweight tools made of plastic, resin and aluminum, and child-sized hoes, rakes and trowels are lighter for weeding, working the soil and digging small holes. All tools and adaptations need to

be safe to use. The finished product should be free of any rough edges or seams that potentially could cause a sore or blister from extensive use.

A lightweight plastic cart with two, three, or four wheels is more stable than a heavy metal wheel barrow with one front wheel. Plastic watering cans with long spouts and well-balanced handles are better than heavy metal cans. Lightweight hoses and hose carriers with wheels make watering easier. Snap-on nozzles are easier to use than ones that need to be screwed on.

Before beginning gardening, do stretching to warm up muscles and take an anti-inflammatory before gardening to ward off potential swelling and soreness. Apply good hand cream and wear gloves. Change your position and activity often. Start well-hydrated and drink water frequently. Use sunscreen/protective clothing/hat to avoid sunburn. Take regular rest breaks and you will be able to garden longer. Use a chair, stool, kneeler, knee pads or rolling cart. Use proper lifting techniques.

Master gardeners host plant sale

The Central Oregon Master Gardener Association will hold their annual plant sale on June 6, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This is the first year that the plant sale is being held at the OSU Extension Office on the Deschutes County Fairgrounds near parking lot D.

The master gardeners will be selling vegetable plants grown in Central Oregon that will thrive in our difficult growing conditions. There will be nine varieties of tomatoes as well as peppers, basil, chard and kale. They will also have for sale bearded iris from Schreiners' Iris Garden in Salem that were grown and divided by master gardeners right here in Central Oregon. There are 11 beautiful hybrids for sale.

Master gardeners will be available to answer your questions and to demonstrate the proper way to plant a tomato plant and how to plant iris. Many handouts will be available including information on hardening off your

plants prior to planting in the garden, etc.

Other activities will be going on during the sale which will make for a fun and educational day. Vendors will be selling flower plants and yard art items.

Learn all about season extenders and how much they can help here in Central Oregon. Row cover and soil thermometers will be for sale also.

Proceeds support programs in the tri-county area.

The mission of the Central Oregon Master Gardener Association is to:

- Teach sustainable gardening practices which have their foundation in research-based information.
- Support the OSU horticulture program in Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties.
- Promote the OSU Extension Service Master Gardener program in Central Oregon and statewide.

The Master Gardener program has trained hundreds of volunteers.



Sisters Rental

When spring rolls around and it's time to get your landscape in shape, folks in Sisters Country turn to Sisters Rental. They have the tools and equipment to get the job done safely, efficiently, and effectively. Sisters Rental also has bulk materials — bark, dirt, and gravel — for your landscaping projects. They also carry base sand and top-coat sand for laying pavers.

They'll be stocking bulk BioFine® top-coat for lawns and compost for your yard and landscape. These products are from recycled lawn trimmings with no additives, supplied locally by High Country Disposal. They'll also have the equipment to apply the materials.

Sisters Rental is an Elite STIHL® dealer, carrying products from chainsaws to blowers to safety equipment.

Their gold certified technicians are the best around for repairing your equipment.

So whether you need to rent equipment, get your equipment repaired and serviced for the season, or buy materials for your projects, Sisters Rental is your headquarters.

LOCAL FIR MIX DYED IN MULTIPLE COLORS!

Also: Sliverless Hemlock Bark Mulch!
Come take a look!

SISTERS RENTAL
541-549-9631

506 N. Pine St. • www.SistersRental.com
Sales • Service • Rentals • Accessories

K S M Masonry • Pavers
RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL

OUTSIDE FIREPLACE SPECIALIST

Get Your Projects Started Today & Enjoy Your Summer!



CALL TODAY FOR A FREE QUOTE:
541-389-0070 **KSSTONE.COM** ext. 15078

Healthy Soils make Healthy Plants!



We Deliver!

Give your garden a boost! Our compost is locally produced and tested to ensure quality & reliability.



High Country Disposal
541-548-4984
highcountrydisposal.com
1090 NE Hemlock Ave., Redmond



TREE SERVICES



TIMBER STAND
IMPROVEMENT

LICENSED | BONDED | INSURED
CCB#190496

NATE GOODWIN
ISA Certified Arborist
PN-7987A
541-771-4825
NatedGoodwin@gmail.com

- Pruning specialists
- Large tree and hazard removal
- Arborist evaluations/consultations
- Land management/fuels planning
- Stump grinding/removal
- Tree planting/design
- Plant health care
- Low-impact rigging and preservation