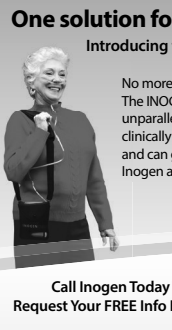


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BOOMERS & BEYOND

Marigold Seeds

How are you doing with your time-filling activities now that so many of us are locked up inside and told not to go out? Have you been able to complete any of your projects?

Part of my plan to fill some of the hours in my stay-at-home time was to get a start on flowers for this summer. I planned to get a small seed starter kit and a packet of marigold seeds. I looked forward to seeing the little greenery

coming up, a sign of life. My plan went nowhere. Where are all the marigold seeds?

While I almost understand why the stores are out of bread and canned beans, who is buying all the flower seeds from nurseries and gardening centers? Granted, I only tried to order from locations in my growing zone, but still ... how can they all be out of stock?

Learning how to solve the Rubik's cube didn't go well

either, even with the help of multiple YouTube videos that promised to teach how to solve within 30 seconds.

Not all my plans have failed so miserably, however. I did manage to finish three French lessons on Duolingo.com. Encouraged by how fast it came to me, I decided to read children's books in French as a way to learn more. The French Experiment (www.thefrenchexperiment.com) offers not only books in French

but lessons.

As I write this, there are still a handful of states where the governor has not issued mandatory stay at home orders. If you're in one of those states, pretend that you are under restrictions. Your job is to keep yourself healthy. To do that you need to stay at home. Imagine that every other person outside has the virus, because there's a chance that they do and no one knows it yet.

Getting Around Canceled Events

Life might be slowly getting back to normal, but a number of things we anticipated won't be happening now.

The expired prescription-drug drop off: Once a year in my area, the drug store turns its parking lot over to an organization that collects and destroys old drugs. Not this year; it's already been canceled. A thought: Some local police departments have a collection bin in their facility, usually in the lobby. Call to inquire if your po-

lice department has one, or if they're planning a drug event of their own.

The shredding events: Twice a year the bank and the senior center hire a company to bring in their shredding truck and accept all paper items to be shredded: old tax records, bills, documents with personal information on them. This is a very valuable service, and unfortunately, around here those have been canceled. One way to get around this is to have your own shredder. They can be

ordered online, typically for less than \$40. Learn the difference between strip cut, cross cut and confetti cut. Pictures can be deceptive, so read the specs for the machine. Some will only shred small receipts.

Plays and dinners: Once you hear that an event you'd paid for is being canceled, start right away to get your money back. The group might ask that you let them keep your money for their expenses, saying you can claim it as a donation on your taxes. You might con-

sider it, but don't assume you can get a credit for the same event next year. Better to get your money in hand now.

There are so many other events -- senior games and fitness clinics, summer banquet and dance, the legal help event, monthly tech help -- all likely canceled for the foreseeable future.

Tip: Call the organization anyway. They might have found a way to safely hold their events.

Who is most vulnerable to osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease in which the density and quality of bones are reduced. According to the International Osteoporosis

Foundation, age and gender are two of the fixed risk factors for osteoporosis. Fixed risks factors are things that cannot be changed, and the

IOF notes the importance of being aware of these factors. Awareness of the fixed risk factors for osteoporosis allows people to take steps to reduce bone mineral loss in an effort to prevent osteoporosis. Bone loss is gradual and painless, and people may experience no symptoms suggesting they are developing osteoporosis, even though the National Osteoporosis Foundation notes that as many as one in two women and up to one in four men over age 50 will break a bone due to osteoporosis. In addition to age and gender, the NOF notes that certain diseases and conditions can increase the likelihood that people

with develop osteoporosis. Autoimmune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis and certain types of cancer, include breast cancer and prostate cancer, also can elevate a person's risk for osteoporosis. People who have neurological or nervous system disorders, such as Parkinson's disease and spinal cord injuries, also may be more vulnerable to osteoporosis than those without such conditions. Men and women age 50 and older should discuss their medical histories and their risk factors for osteoporosis with their physicians.

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