

# Wheelchair Gardening

## Continue Your Joy of Planting with Wheelchair Gardening

By John Sanderson

Are you in a wheelchair, and long to dig in the dirt and create flowering beauty and grow far more zucchini than you can give away?

Or are your knees just starting to age and even though you've loved gardening all your life, you're having more trouble getting up and down and are afraid you'll have to give up gardening altogether? Did you botch the last pruning of your roses because of the worsening arthritis in your hands?

Welcome to the world of the physically challenged gardener. Don't despair. Adapt and learn about wheelchair gardening.

There's plenty of help out there in the form of advice, tools, raised flower beds and other specialized equipment for wheelchair gardening. A Google search of "wheelchair gardening" leads to nearly 3,000 websites with helpful tips and information on specific adaptive equipment.

A search on "disabled gardening" gives more than 2,800 results where you can find advice and "handicapped gardening" yields more than 6,000.

### **Problem: The ground is just too far down there.**

Think about doing your gardening while sitting on a chair, instead of on the ground, squatting or bending over. The most obvious solution for wheelchair gardening is to build raised flower beds and scatter containers throughout your garden area.

Buy cheap plastic outdoor chairs and place one beside each mini-garden so you don't have to drag or carry when it's time to weed. You can just sit down and enjoy the feel of moist earth beneath your fingers and breathe in the heavenly smell of freshly applied fish emulsion.

If you hang a cup holder on the edge of your container, you can even have the luxury of tea or coffee with your weeds. Maybe the fish emulsion should wait.

Don't think about what you've lost now that you can't crawl around weeding the perennial border; teach your grandchild or a neighborhood kid the joy to be found doing that task... you've just discovered a new adventure -- wheelchair gardening.

The good news is that you may find different special areas of your yard where you can start a mini-garden.

Get creative with your wheelchair gardening. Put a beautiful container near your front door and plant wonderfully scented flowers to greet your guests ... or perhaps a nice cherry tomato plant from which they can steal on their way to ring your doorbell.

Put a waist high herb garden right outside your kitchen door and add an area in it for your favorite cut flowers.

When you're deciding where to locate the raised bed or container, be sure to remember physically demanding practicalities like dragging a heavy hose to water it. Think and plan a low energy solution for what you'll do with the compost material.

### **Problem: My painful hands don't have the strength for ...**

You can get tools which extend your arms to reach the ground level flower bed from a sitting position while wheelchair gardening.

Several manufacturers make specially tools with light weight handles designed to keep the wrist and hand in a stress-free position and to provide a firmer grip. Small, light rakes, hoes, etc. like this can work wonders.

Think ratchet pruner, ratchet lopping shears ... let the laws of physics give your hands a hand. You'll be amazed when you look at the tools available. Pull difficult weeds by stepping on a lever.

### **Problem: I get so tired so quickly.**

Hey, the weeds didn't grow all at once; you don't have to pull them all at once. Pace yourself. Find ways to make wheelchair gardening something you do while you sit and drink a cup of tea and listen to the birds, rather than a work chore you slave away at for a full afternoon.

Pull one weed from the scented garden near your front door on your way out and another weed on the way in. Plant parsley in your kitchen door herb garden while your toast is toasting and the coffee is dripping.

Remember, one of the nice things about flowers is they don't have anything to prove. We can all learn a lesson from them.

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Source: Mobility-Advisor.com. <http://www.mobility-advisor.com/wheelchair-gardening.html>