

BBC

SPECIAL SUBSCRIBER EDITION

September 2017

GARDEN PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR

Gardeners World

Subscriber
exclusive!

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Feelgood gardens

Why **your senses** are
the secret to a perfect plot

- **MONTY** reveals how you can help bees' survival
- **CAROL** shares skills that will save you £££s
- Follow **ALAN's** autumn plan for your greenhouse
- **MARK LANE** on gardening through adversity

PLUS Claim your 150 free bulbs to plant now! Turn to page 14

Gardening for all abilities

We share how gardening has changed lives, and ideas to help you garden, whether you have a disability or just aren't as mobile as you'd like

INTERVIEW

If you were ever in doubt of the therapeutic benefits of gardening, ask *BBC Gardeners' World* TV presenter Mark Lane, who says horticulture brought him back from "a very dark place" after a car crash left him using a wheelchair. "Gardening has changed my life on a physical, emotional and mental level," he says, "just being outside surrounded by nature... it's mindfulness, I suppose. You become focused and before you know it you've forgotten your problems."

Mark has created a successful garden design business and last year joined *GW* TV, where he highlights, among other things, issues for those with mobility problems. Although born with spina bifida, it hardly affected him until after the accident 16 years ago. "We had to suddenly rethink our lives and my partner, Jasen, said, 'you know so much about plants why don't you do something with them?'" After a garden landscape course, he hasn't looked back.

His gardens for clients, both without and with mobility problems, avoid a straight-sided, raised-bed, 'institutionalised' look, instead he incorporates features like raised tables and uses a long-handled spade to dig holes and a 'grabber' to handle plant pots.

Mark's biggest bugbear is paths that are too narrow for wheelchairs and a lack of turning spots; and he recommends raised path edging for those with spatial awareness problems. In his own garden, hedges are at a height he can trim himself. "I want the garden to be like a normal garden so there are hedges that are at a 'teasing' height for those standing who can see over them. Of course, I can't, but I can still see a hedge and wonder what is around the corner."

After Mark's many successes in gardening so far you can't help wondering what else is around the corner for him.



'Gardening saved my life'

Mark Lane

SMART IDEAS



Mark's 10 tips for easier gardening

- 1 **Use a camping table** to sit at when planting and sowing.
- 2 **Find a shady spot** out of the wind to sow seeds. Use a bulldog clip to hold seed packets in place.
- 3 **Decant compost** or gravel into smaller bags to place on your table and use a scoop to prevent spills.
- 4 **Pace yourself.** Use an egg timer and work for just five minutes then take a break and repeat. Increase the time until you find your ideal work period.
- 5 **Long-handled tools** are great if you can't bend or kneel easily. Or fix a trowel or fork to a pole with cable ties.
- 6 **Lightweight tools** are easier for long jobs. Try one out in a shop first.
- 7 **Ergonomic tools**, such as secateurs with rotating handles or curved handles can be more comfortable.
- 8 **Use pots** if a raised bed isn't possible. To reduce a pot's weight, fill half of it with polystyrene then add soil. Raise a planted pot by placing on an upturned pot.
- 9 **Use tubing** to sow seeds in borders or veg patches to avoid bending. Cut a length to suit your standing/seated height then drop each seed down the tube into a planting hole made with a cane or pole.
- 10 **Use tarmac paths** for wheelchairs – they're relatively cheap to lay and now come in many colours. Self-binding gravel is a smarter but pricier option.



Niki finds raised beds and children's tools a help in the garden

"I just get on with it"

Niki Preston

INTERVIEW

Blogger Niki Preston was born with phocomelia, leaving her with shortened arms and limited fingers, plus she has reduced mobility and can't bend. However, this hasn't stopped her passion for gardening and now she is a well-respected reviewer of specialist garden tools. "I just get on with it; I'm very stubborn," says Niki, whose no-nonsense blog is called *The Two Fingered Gardener*. "My garden is made up of raised beds of varying

heights. I can stand or sit at the best ones, and carry on gardening. I have seating in every corner, so I can do a bit then sit, do a bit more and then sit again. Also, as I'm only 4' 9", my hanging baskets are lower than normal, so I can reach to deadhead and water them." Niki recommends using good quality children's gardening tools, as they're smaller and lighter, and she also puts all her equipment in a small plastic trug so that it's always with her. nikipreston.com

GET THE KNOWLEDGE

Garden visiting made easier

Do you love visiting gardens, but worry about getting around them easily? The website accessiblegardens.org.uk reviews gardens open to the public on how easy they are to use, whether for visitors with walking difficulties or families with pushchairs. Reviewers score everything from the garden itself,

to the carpark, toilets and cafe for accessibility. The site needs more reviews of gardens so send yours to reviews@accessiblegardens.org.uk



Find gardens that suit all ages and abilities

Products for limited reach



Darlac telescopic cut-and-hold snapper
Lightweight and single-handed. £29.99, selections.com



Rectangle raised garden planter
Easy-to-assemble steel planter. £34.99, wayfair.co.uk



Hi-Lo hanging basket pulley
Allows you to raise and lower a hanging basket by up to a metre for easier access. £7.99, crocus.co.uk

SMART IDEAS

Good for the memory

Gardens that stimulate the senses (see p41 for ways to create a sensory garden) can help to prompt memories, which can benefit dementia sufferers. Incorporating scented plants, plants that rustle – such as grasses – and feathery plants that invite touching are beneficial. Growing vegetables and herbs for the kitchen is also satisfying. Circular or figure-of-eight paths can help dementia sufferers navigate the garden without coming to a dead end, according to Colten Care, which operates four dementia-specific care homes with gardens. For more, visit alzheimers.org.uk



Plants that are good to touch, hear or smell stimulate healing senses

PHOTOS: SARAH CUTLER; GETTY/FAWVOLD; PRODUCT RESEARCH: MICHELLE ALLWOOD

Products for difficulty moving



Garden hand cart
One-handed use. £69, easybarrow.co.uk



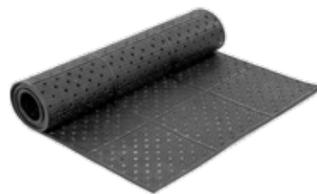
Rolling garden work seat
For no-bend weeding. £34.99, springchicken.co.uk



Folding garden kneeler
With handrails. £25.99, welcomemobility.co.uk



Hip-trug
Can be clipped to a belt. (2 sizes) £9.99/£12.99, burgonandball.com



Roll-out trackway
Creates a path for wheelchair users. £336, essentialaids.com



Roundup weedkiller with applicator wand
Get rid of weeds without bending. Wand extends to 86cm. £19.99, robertdyas.co.uk



Hozelock Flexi Spray
Allows you to water into awkward spots. £20.99, argos.co.uk

Products for hand dexterity



Fiskars PowerGear bypass pruner
Gears increase your cutting power. £32.99, amazon.co.uk



Easi-Grip cultivator and trowel set
Prevent wrist discomfort. £19.95, peta-uk.com



SeedSava
Helps with fiddly seed sowing, ensuring accurate spacing. £19.50, seedsava.co.uk



ReliefGrip Bionic Gloves
Designed by an orthopaedic surgeon to improve dexterity. £29.99, bionic-glove.co.uk



General purpose gripping aid
Improves the grip of anyone with limited dexterity. £49.95, activehands.com

GET INVOLVED

Host a fundraiser

When gold medal-winning garden designer Cleve West made the first of the Horatio's Gardens – created for victims of spinal injuries – at Salisbury Hospital's Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment department, he asked to be pushed around the grounds on a hospital bed so he could view it from a patient's

perspective. It's that attention to detail that has made the garden so beneficial for patients.

Everything in the garden is designed to work for them, from the width of the paths, to the height of the planters and tables and automated doors which enable easy access for patients. The second Horatio's Garden is

at a spinal injuries unit in Glasgow and more are being created: at Stoke Mandeville, by Joe Swift; and at Oswestry by Bunny Guinness. But donations are still needed to build them. For information about how to get involved go to horationsgarden.org.uk or call 07429 140918.



Horatio's Gardens are designed to soothe spinal injury patients

GET INVOLVED

Community growing

A community garden that helps people with brain injuries, mobility problems, learning disabilities and isolated, elderly people, has opened in south-east London.

The garden, at Lewisham's Albany Theatre, is supported by Lewisham Homes and features fruit and veg patches and raised beds, and offers gardening courses for adults with learning

disabilities. It also works with groups, such as GoodGym, which combines aerobic exercise with manual tasks like gardening. Jean Clarke, 82, who helps out in the garden, says: "I haven't felt so happy for ages, working with others and getting fresh air."

For more information, email gardening@thealbany.org.uk or call 07716 398822.



An Albany gardener relishes her radishes

PHOTOS: CAMILLA GREENWELL, JASON INGRAM



Chris has found ways to keep himself fit and gardening

“Keep trying, eventually you will get change”

Chris Beardshaw

INTERVIEW

Award-winning garden designer and TV presenter Chris Beardshaw faced life in a wheelchair due to problems with his toe joints as a teenager. He couldn't stand without pain: "Getting shoes on and off was impossible," he says. After various treatments and pain relief for rheumatoid arthritis (RA), but no conclusive diagnosis, the threat of a wheelchair was "galvanising" and he decided to change the way he lived.

After extensive reading (now he'd advise using arthritisresearchuk.org) his solution was to swap high-impact exercise for cycling and changes to his diet. "You have to be methodical; go through and see what it is that's aggravating the condition," he says.

With more than 100 different forms of arthritis, an exact diagnosis is not easy, but by cutting out food groups

then reintroducing them to his diet Chris found that citrus fruit and anything from the potato family, including aubergine and tomatoes, made his symptoms worse.

Now he takes a glucosamine and chondroitin supplement and multi-vitamins: "I found the product that suits me and I've modified quantities to take the minimum," he says. He also takes extract of devil's claw as an anti-inflammatory for flare-ups: "high doses for short periods work for me."

Another big help is getting the best-fitting comfortable shoes possible, wearing thick hiking socks to protect his feet and using orthopaedic insoles.

"Keep trying out things for a reasonable amount of time," he says. "You don't get change in a matter of days, but eventually you will."

READER TIPS

I have divided my large garden into smaller gardens so that each one is not overwhelming. Beds are heavily mulched with manure so that perennial weeds are weakened and easier to pull out. I leave the 'digging' to the worms, which loosen the heavy clay soil. **Lou Duggan**

I got help to remove the lawn and laid gravel, as I can't mow with a fractured spine and dodgy hips! I've planted lots of evergreens and flowering shrubs to minimise the need to bend to plant, and to help with the winter blues. **Shirley Collen**

My husband and grandson laid slabs so the garden was one level. They used railway sleepers to build a wide step in and out of my greenhouse. I cannot bend due to RA. My garden is my haven, no matter how much I hurt, it always does me good to get out in it. **Linda White Jervis**



Products for reduced strength



Fiskars light digging spade
Weighs just 1.1kg. £19.99, screwfix.com



HandiMoova all-terrain trolley
Lightweight design. £100, handiworld.com



Elho Loft Urban pot
With wheels. Range of colours/sizes. £20.99 /£35.99, crocus.co.uk



EziMate Back Saver
This handle attaches to a range of tools. £10.00, welcomemobility.co.uk



Wilkinson Sword ratchet loppers
For easy cutting £19.99, garden-goodies.co.uk

READER TIPS

To help my husband with his back problems, we have lots of tall pots and raised beds with decking tops, so that we can sit on them and lean in to tend the garden.

Pauline Bilevych



I'm recovering from a chronic back and hip injury. When I garden, I ask for help, I am patient with myself. I do low-down jobs, then walk around, then do higher jobs and switch again. Mindfulness is probably the best thing.

Colleen Esc

I fell off my roof clearing ivy from the eaves. I'm out of my wheelchair now, but still suffer. I've changed to a no-dig, less formal approach and have allowed the garden to become wilder and more rambling - the wildlife loves it!

Maria Elizabeth

Share your experiences

Share your tips and experiences of gardening with limited mobility at the contact details on page 19, and we'll print them later in the year.

GET INVOLVED

Thriving volunteers

Volunteer gardeners are needed at Thrive centres in London, Birmingham, and Berkshire. Thrive is the UK's leading charity that uses gardening to help people with disabilities and ill health.

It offers social and therapeutic horticulture, and also runs

courses such as Understanding Disability In Garden Design.

There are volunteer taster sessions at Battersea, London, on 20 September and 17 November; at Kings Heath Park, Birmingham, on the second Monday of each month and at Beech Hill, near Reading, on

1 September, 2 October, 1 November and 4 December.

Thrive also has details of more than 700 garden projects throughout the UK that need volunteer help.

To get involved or find out how Thrive can help you, call 0118 988 5688 or visit thrive.org.uk



Volunteers at the Thrive centres find it rewarding to see how gardening can transform lives

GET THE KNOWLEDGE

Long-distance learning

Want to learn more about gardening, but can't travel to study? Try one of these options:

KLC's Open Learning Diploma can be studied at your own pace and covers a range of topics. (020 7376 3377; klc.co.uk)

British Academy of Garden Design has home study courses ranging from three to nine months. (020 3393 1172; gardendesignacademy.com)

The English Gardening School offers a distance

learning course created by the designer Rosemary Alexander. (020 7352 4347; englishgardeningsschool.co.uk)

Inchbald has an Online Garden Design course. (020 7730 5508; inchbald.co.uk)