

The background of the entire cover is a close-up photograph of several bright red raspberries hanging from green stems with small leaves. The raspberries are in various stages of ripeness, with some showing more green at the base.

Which?

NEW PLANTS

Janice Shipp on how the latest varieties have performed at our trial garden

MAKING GARDENING EASIER

Practical ways to take the strain out of gardening and bring back the joy

BEETROOT AND CHARD

Colin Randel shares his growing tips for these popular veg, plus jobs to do now

October 2018

Gardening



ON TEST

SWEET POTATOES

LONG-LASTING POTS

PRIMROSES

AUTUMN TIDY-UP TOOLS

Raspberries

ON TEST: IS IT WORTH PRUNING FOR A SECOND CROP OF FRUIT?

1. Tables

Find lots of portable tables of differing heights as these can be used around you when planting and sowing. Camping tables are ideal because they fold up out of the way when you've finished. Non-slip surfaces are even better.



Mark's wheelchair-accessible garden

Making gardening easier



There's no reason to lose the joy of gardening when we become less able bodied or if we are disabled. Wheelchair-user **Mark Lane** shares some of the techniques he's learned to make gardening easier

2. A place to sit

A comfortable place to sit is important. Find somewhere that you like to sit to sow a tray with seeds or to plant up pots and hanging baskets. Also, find somewhere out of the wind and in the shade. Seeds and seed packets are light so use a bulldog clip to hold them in place so they don't blow on to the ground.



3. Compost scoop

Use a scoop for getting compost and gravel out of bags. My other tip is to buy smaller bags of compost that can be placed on a table next to you; otherwise, ask someone to put some compost from a 60L bag into a smaller bag or 'trug' before you start working.



4. Pace yourself

Pacing your activities is essential, especially if you tire quickly. Use an egg timer and set it to go off in five minutes. Try working for the full time. If it's too long, reduce the time. If you think five minutes is not long enough, think about the task ahead. It's better to do things in shorter time periods with gaps in between than it is to work solidly for 30 minutes, after which you will probably be too tired to continue. Pacing will, over time, result in more work being done because you allow time for rest. Once you find your baseline you can then work around it every day of the week.



'You need to think outside the box but there is a solution for most things. Disability should not stop you from gardening'

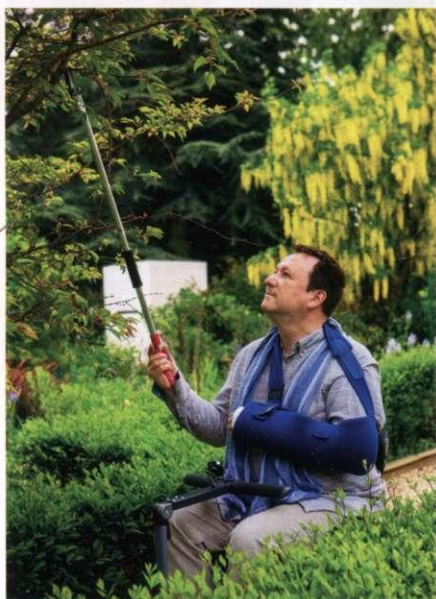
5. Long-handled tools

Buying the right tools for you is a personal thing. Try them out in the shop. Long-handled tools are great for people in wheelchairs and for people who can't bend or kneel easily. The ones with interchangeable heads, although more expensive, are a good idea. Alternatively, fix an existing trowel or fork to a length of pole (at your desired length) with cable ties.



Long-handled tools are great for people in wheelchairs

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A reacher grabber is ideal for picking up things and reaching plants

6. Grabber

Use a grabber to hold a plant; a reacher grabber is a long-handled tool with a claw at one end. It's ideal for picking up things and for reaching for plants that need deadheading or pruning. Also, try this for placing a plant in a border:

- Buy a plant in a 9cm pot.
- Tap out the plant on one of your tables.
- Use a long-handled trowel to dig a hole in the ground.
- Use the grabber to hold the plant by the roots and drop it into the hole.
- Either backfill with the long-handled trowel or fill the 9cm pot with compost and using the grabber dispense the soil into the hole around the plant (it will take a couple of goes to get the hang of it).
- Now pick up the 9cm pot with the grabber and using the base of the pot, tap down the soil around the plant.
- Water.
- Job done!

7. Lightweight tools

Many tools can feel heavy when in use for a period of time, so when buying try them out in the shop to see how they feel. There are some good lightweight aluminium tools on the market. Be mindful that some lighter tools are not so robust and may need changing in a year or so.

8. Ergonomic tools

Some tools have been specifically made with ergonomics in mind. From moulded handles that sit comfortably in your hand to rotating handles on secateurs. There are some with curved handles for ease of use. Again, try them out, go around the shop holding them and see what you think.

9. Plant in pots

Half fill a pot with polystyrene and top up with soil to keep the weight down so you can place them where you want. If arranging pots together, turn a couple of empty pots upside down and position the planted pot on top. Place other planted pots around the base, water and feed; over time the upturned pots will disappear.

10. Vertical planting

There are some excellent vertical planting systems on the market. Ensure they are fitted securely to a wall or fence and have a drip irrigation system. A cheaper alternative, which will need replacing every year, is to use a hanging shoe organiser. Fill each pocket with soil and your chosen plants. Keep well watered and fed for a glorious display.



There are good lightweight aluminium tools on the market



Plant in pots if a 'raised' table isn't possible



Keep vertical plant systems well watered for a great display



Plastic tubing is ideal for sowing seeds

11. Tubing for sowing

When sowing seeds in borders, allotment or veg patches, use plastic tubing. Clear is best, but standard water tubing is fine. Cut to the right length, either from a seated position in a wheelchair to a standing position without the need to bend. After making planting holes in the soil either with a broom handle or bamboo cane, position the tube above the hole and drop a seed into the top of the tube. Let gravity do its thing and with minimal effort a seed is planted in the hole. Either using the cane or a long-handled tool, cover the seed with soil. Have fun and use different sizes of tubing for different sizes of seeds.

12. Be comfortable

Always try to remember to wear a hat, long sleeves and trousers. Some plants, soils and composts can irritate the skin. Also, this will stop you from catching the sun and burning, and will keep wasps and unwanted insects off your skin. Also drink plenty of water while you work.