

# Gardening with Arthritis – Safe Aging in the Garden: *It Doesn't Have to Hurt!*

Laura Akgerman, M.A., C.R.C., Disability Services Coordinator, OSU Extension & Ohio AgrAbility  
 Pat Holmes, MS, CFCS, Family & Consumer Sciences Educator, Montgomery County



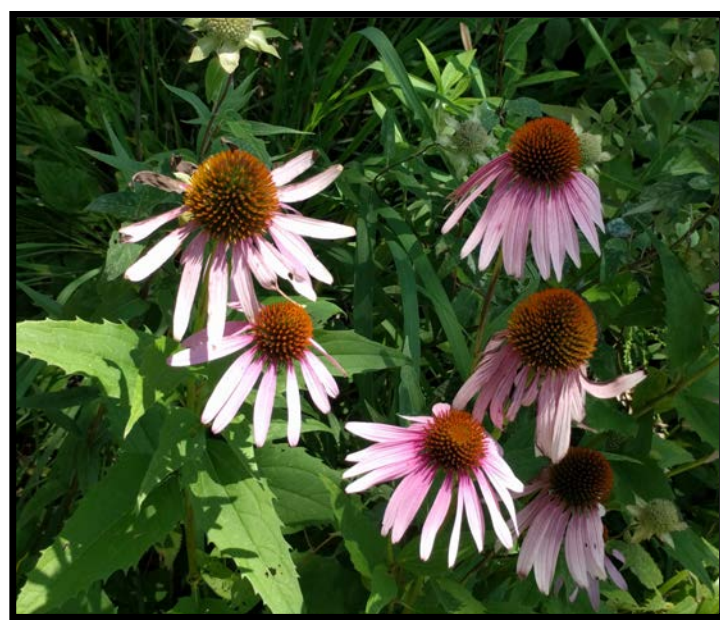
## Gardening with Arthritis

Nearly 1 in 4 American adults report arthritis symptoms, in rural communities, nearly 1 in 3 adults are impacted by arthritis. The highest rates of arthritis are found among women, older adults, smokers, adults with less education, higher body mass index, and those who are less physically active.

Of those affected by arthritis, nearly half report arthritis limits activity. Physical activity can decrease pain and improve physical function by up to 40%, but it may be intimidating for people with chronic pain.

What is an alternative to traditional exercise?

## Gardening.



## Ohio AgrAbility Program

Ohio AgrAbility is a partnership between The Ohio State University - College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and Easter Seals Greater Cincinnati.

Ohio AgrAbility's mission to promote success in agriculture for Ohio's farmers and farm families who are coping with disability or a long-term health condition.

**Gardening with Arthritis** is an educational program developed by the National AgrAbility Project to educate people about ways to continue working on their garden or farm if they have arthritis or another limitation.



*Raised garden beds allow easy access for gardeners in wheelchairs or mobility devices, or those who have difficulty bending or stooping*



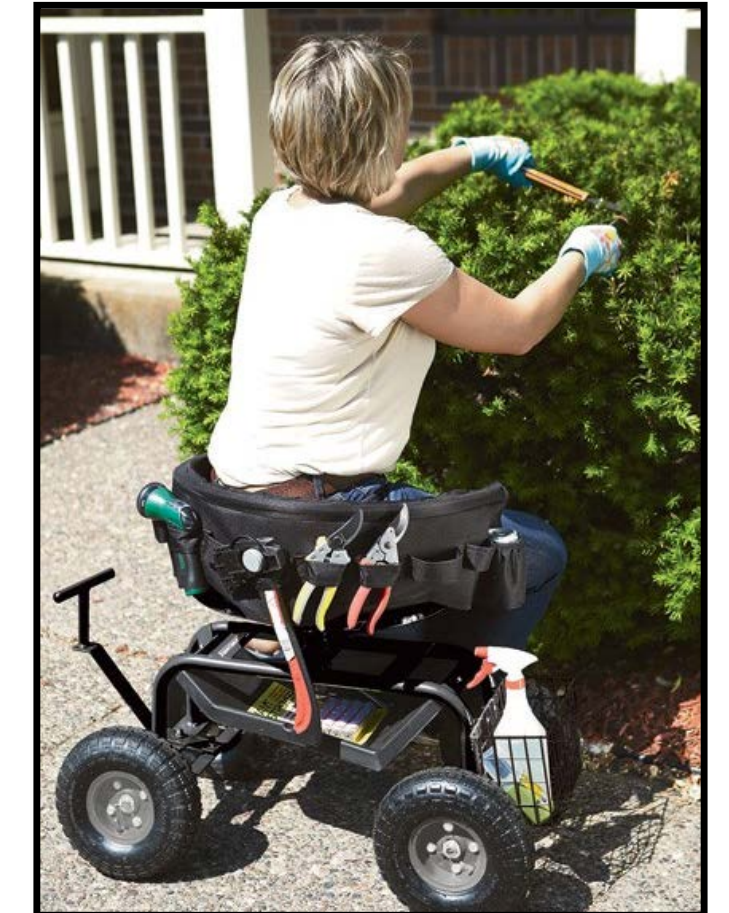
*Smooth wide paths are easy to navigate for people with limited mobility, or mobility devices.*

## Tips for Gardening with Arthritis

- Stretch and warm up before gardening
- Switch tasks often, going from bending jobs to reaching jobs
- Wear a knee brace or knee pads (if needed), and wear comfortable shoes
- Carry items close to your body, make frequent trips with small loads
- Store tools and equipment in or near the garden

## Use the right tools

- Tools with "spring action design" can reduce hand strain
- Ergonomic tools fit the hand, and are comfortable to use and hold
- Tool handles can be made softer and more comfortable to use by wrapping the handle with pipe insulation



*Rolling works seats are ideal for people who cannot bend or kneel, and provide a steady seat that can rotate, raise and lower. The tool holders and baskets on the cart can be used to store and transport tools.*

## Interested in learning more about Gardening with Arthritis?

- Contact Ohio AgrAbility to schedule a Gardening with Arthritis presentation
- Ohio AgrAbility provides educational resources and training and technical assistance to clients, Extension Educators, disability organizations and the agricultural community.

### REFERENCES

Boring MA, Hootman JM, Liu Y, et al. Prevalence of Arthritis and Arthritis-Attributable Activity Limitation by Urban-Rural County Classification — United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Journal* 2017;66:527–532. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6620a2>

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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