

## REDUCING MAINTENANCE (AND BACKACHE) IN THE GARDEN

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### 1. Reducing maintenance

Define what you consider to be a gardening 'chore'. Weeding? Taking care of the lawn? Deadheading and staking perennials? Raking? Watering? The answer will be different for each of us.

#### Plant selection

Evergreen, deciduous and herbaceous – 3:2:1

Look for fabulous FOLIAGE (see great ideas in **my books!**)

Right plant, right place – we want plants that thrive not just survive.

Avoid divas— no primping, deadheading, staking, spraying, invasive species, rampant self sowers, water hogs, deer caviar or slug favorites – unless you REALLY like that plant and don't mind the work.

Do you really want to climb ladders? Wisteria, climbing roses, tall fruit trees and many vines get tall!

#### Water features and rockeries

A self-contained, recirculating fountain is much easier to manage than a 5' deep koi pond with surrounding rockery and waterfall.

#### Watering

Avoid water hogs unless you have an irrigation system. Plants with similar water needs should go together to reduce water usage and time. Use drip systems in pots. Choose hose reels and watering cans carefully. (Haws long-reach cans are great). Automatic irrigation saves hours.

#### Weeding

The drier the soil surface and the less exposed soil, the fewer the weeds. Mulches, groundcovers and wide spreading plants all help.

#### Lawns

Do you really need that much? Do you need it at all? What is its purpose? Re-think tradition.

## 2. Reducing backache and more

No tools will help if your body is weak. Strength exercises and yoga are highly recommended as a pre-season build up, post-gardening recovery and everyday health.

Re-think how you do things; and don't do any one task for an extended period of time

Problems bending? Try a combination of sitting, squatting, kneeling, kneeling with one leg extended and using long handled tools.

Avoid twisting – use carts that you *push* rather than pull. Double wheeled cart easier than standard wheelbarrow

Climbing – do you really want to use a ladder to reach that rose, wisteria, clematis or full size apple tree?? Re-think your plant selection. Try the Corona cut 'n' hold long-reach pruner

Lifting – chin up, neutral neck, bend from the knees and hug those bags of soil to your chest. Don't hold them away from your body. Also try a luggage cart for getting bags of soil from the car. For containers use rolling stands or lift using a PotLifter

Arthritis in the hands – look for **ergonomic** tool options such as the Corona lightweight bypass pruners

**Finally**, don't be embarrassed to ask for help. Choose what you **WANT** to do and budget for help occasionally to do what you find hard to manage or don't enjoy.

## Resources

### Books

My 3 books are full of ideas for designing with foliage first

Gardening for a Lifetime (Sydney Eddison, Timber Press)

Right Plant, Right place (Nicola Ferguson, Fireside)

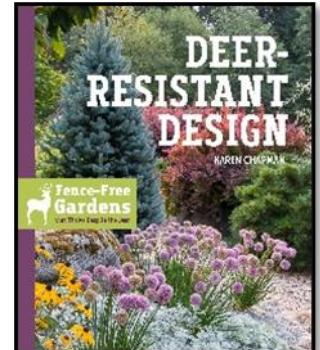
The Lifelong Gardener (Toni Gattone, Timber Press)

### (More) Tools

Red Pig Garden Tools – quality tools, custom work and will even modify your tools to fit!

Restorative Yoga

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