

# IT'S *Spring* GARDENING TIME

Weekend gardener

## Avoiding pain and injuries

By CAROL ROBERTS  
Copley News Service

When you're a weekend activist, whether your activity is playing baseball, jogging or gardening, you're likely to suffer some pain — and possibly injury.

It's hard not to put too many hours into such activities when a beautiful day comes along. It may be especially hard for gardeners, who can be tempted to put in six hours of gardening because tomorrow it may rain.

But that's not the way to do it unless you're in the liniment business, according to *Gardens For All* newsmagazine columnist Isabel Bearman Bucher. She said you should start with much shorter hours and prepare with warm-up exercises just as other athletes do.

Some suggestions:  
— Head and shoulder rolls. Very slowly and gently roll shoulders five times forward and five times backward. Drop head forward and gently roll from side to side going all around the clock.

— Skier squat. Place back against a wall and assume a sitting position, as if you were on an imaginary chair. Count to 10.

Relax. Repeat five times.

— Lower back and thigh. Lie flat with back pressed to floor or bed, legs extended. Draw one leg into a knee-up position, toward the chest, for five repetitions. Repeat with the other leg. Work up to 10 for each leg. With back still flat on the floor and knees bent, tighten buttocks and hold for a count of 10. Relax. Repeat five times.

— Victory stretch. Place feet apart, gently reach up with one arm, squeezing fist over the head. Drop other hand to your side. Count to five. Reverse arms. Do three repetitions for each side.

— Deep knee bends. Place one hand on some support, like a fence or chair. Slowly squat all the way down, then slowly slide up. Legs should be angled to the sides for more stretch in the groin area. Start with five repetitions, then work up to 15 over time. The slower the better.

Aside from possible injury from pulled or strained muscles, a gardener can injure himself with gardening equipment. The best safeguard against this is to read instructions carefully on any equipment, fertilizer or insecticide used.



### Sharing ideas

Charles Robinson, surrounded by the results of his gardening efforts, shares his expertise.

Copley News Service photo

## Garden advice for beginners

By GREGG HOWARD  
Copley News Service

Gardening is a satisfying and productive hobby that has physical, aesthetic and financial benefits, according to a pamphlet titled *Gardening: The Practical Pleasure*.

The pamphlet, produced by Snow & Nealley Co., a manufacturer of gardening and hand tools, offers an overview of gardening and advice to beginning gardeners.

Following are excerpts of information.

Physically, gardening is good exercise. Also, when a person grows his own food, he can be certain that it is grown without chemicals, unless he chooses to use them.

Aesthetically, trees and shrubs provide shade and privacy. Food grown at home often tastes better than produce that has been stored and shipped long distances. A home gardener also can grow varieties of fruits and vegetables that are not grown commercially because they don't store or ship well.

Financially, landscaping enhances the value of property, and growing fruits and vegetables saves money on food bills.

Getting started in gardening requires only some basic knowledge about seasons, soils and the life cycles and needs of the plants a person decides to grow.

A beginner should plan to start a garden with hardy, easy-to-grow plants. As experience and confidence grow, a gardener can experiment with plants that are fussier

about their living and growing conditions.

All gardening starts with planning. Draw a prospective garden on paper.

In a flower garden, think about colors and consider the relation of tall plants to small ones. Do you want plants in groups or straight rows? Since flowers bloom at different times of year, plan so that something always is blooming from early spring through late fall.

When planning a vegetable garden, consider how vegetables will influence each other. Corn will act as a wind barrier to protect more fragile plants. Marigolds repel some worms and bugs. Herbs give off powerful odors that can drive insects away, so plant them among vegetables, too.

After planting a garden, keep the plans. This will help a new gardener to distinguish between the young plants and weeds.

After plans have been made, garden soil must be prepared before planting. Plants need soil that is neither too sandy nor too clay-like. Nurseries can evaluate soil and recommend conditioning steps, if necessary. Once planted, a garden needs to be fed to replenish nutrients in the soil. The easiest way to feed a garden is to add a fertilizer containing all needed elements.

Good quality tools are required for preparing and caring for a garden. With appropriate tools, it is easy to cultivate and aerate soil, dislodge weeds, vines and rocks, plant seedlings and bulbs, weed and rake.

## Weeding is gardener's least favorite chore

by GREGG HOWARD  
Copley News Service

Home owners love their lawns and gardens. So much so that a recent Gallup Poll found lawn and garden care topped the list of America's favorite outdoor leisure activities.

The least favorite outdoor activity? The survey results didn't say, but one guess is the weeding that too often accompanies lawn and garden care.

However, weeding can be reduced with a few special techniques, according to Bob Tracinski, consumer information special-

ist for John Deere, a manufacturer of lawn and garden equipment. Tracinski offered several suggestions for controlling the verdant pests before they begin to grow.

"Soil is loaded with sleeping weed seeds that are waiting for the right conditions to germinate," said Tracinski. "Like any plants, weeds need moisture, air, nutrients and sunlight. Deprive them of these elements, and they will remain in a dormant state."

He said one of the most effective preventive measures that a home owner can take is simply to keep the weed seeds in the dark.

"In the garden, mulches spread between plants will help keep weeds from receiving sunlight," said Tracinski. "Many different mulches are available in both synthetic and organic forms. Home gardeners can pick the one that best suits their lifestyle and pocketbook."

Plastic mulches, explained Tracinski, often come in strips that can be placed on top of a seedbed after it has been tilled and fertilized. The plastic sheets come in either solid or mesh styles. Both keep out sunlight, although the more expensive mesh allows water to move into the soil. Gar-

den vegetables and plants grow through crossed slits cut at various intervals.

"Peanut hulls, grass clippings and pine needles also provide effective and economical mulches," Tracinski said. "When using clippings as a mulch, however, it is important to make sure that they are sun dried before being spread on the garden. Avoid clippings from grass that has been chemically treated. It's also a good idea to avoid mulches, such as hay or straw, that may carry weed seeds."

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