

Top Benefits, Best Tools And How To Get Started: Gardening For Seniors



Interested in gardening, but don't know where to begin? Plant a few seeds, we promise this new hobby will grow on you! There are real benefits to gardening for seniors. Gardening can be hard work. If you're ready to take the challenge, keep reading.

Below is some insight on how to start your own garden, the best tools to use and the top benefits of gardening. With a bit of planning and a few helpful tips, you'll be able to enjoy the fruits of your labor in no time.

Steps To Starting A Garden For Seniors

Want to start a garden, but not sure where to begin? Where you decide to plant your garden is critical. To ensure you have the right location for your garden, follow these steps:

1. **Consider the amount of sunlight.** Plants need proper sun exposure in order to grow. This can be easier outdoors but be aware of shadows caused by covered areas such as balconies, patios or window sills. If you're thinking about gardening indoors, keep your plants near a window to ensure that your garden is getting the right amount of vitamin D for the best results.
2. **Make sure the spot is accessible.** Garden accessibility starts with paths. Accessible paths allow for increased mobility and safety of movement throughout the garden. Creating a

pathway to your garden will ease access for canes, walkers and wheelchairs. To avoid any unnecessary stress on your body, your garden should be in a spot where you are comfortable accessing it quickly and easily. Accessible gardening makes gardening easier and more enjoyable for anyone, regardless of limitations.

3. **Choose the best type of garden for you.** When considering where to put your garden, it's helpful to know what type of garden you envision. Do you want flat beds on the ground, tiered planters, pots, raised planters, hanging plants or any other style of planter? Raised beds two to three feet in height allows for easier maintenance and can be a great option for seniors looking to avoid too much kneeling down or bending over.
4. **Pick what type of plants to grow.** Would you be happier with a vegetable garden or a flower garden? When creating an outdoor garden or a flower pot garden, some plants are easier to grow for beginners who are seniors:

[What Are Easy-to-Grow Plants for Seniors? \(visitingangels.com\)](http://visitingangels.com)

Plants like lettuce, green beans and tomatoes are the easiest vegetables to grow. For flowers, sunflowers, zinnias and marigolds are among the easiest to grow. Indoor gardeners, use the indoor gardening starter guide below to help you choose the best plant to start!

Once these bases are covered, your garden should be set up for success. Whether it's indoor or outdoor, the proper care and attention is what will make your garden thrive.

Gardening Help For Seniors: The Best Tools To Use



Gardening is a fun and healthy way to spruce up the beauty of your indoor and outdoor spaces. Sometimes, though, gardening can be a lot of work. Using the right tools can make gardening more enjoyable. While there are plenty of specific products to choose from, we've listed some thoughtful tips to help make gardening easier!

Some tools that can provide gardening help for seniors are:

- **Bright colored tools.** When purchasing a shovel, sheers, watering can or other tools, choose bright colors so that finding your tools is easy. Don't buy green tools, they'll blend in with the grass!
- **Foam grips or ergonomic tools.** Adding foam grips to gardening tools can be helpful for seniors experiencing arthritis. The key features to look for in arthritis-friendly gardening tools include ergonomic design and good grips.
- **Stools.** Keep a stool near your garden to prepare for breaks. Don't overwork yourself.
- **Tool caddy.** House all your tools and gardening supplies in a caddy to avoid making multiple trips. Caddy options come in the form of a tote bag, on wheels or a basket to attach to your wheelchair.

The Top Benefits Of Gardening For Seniors

Gardening is a great excuse to be outside and get your hands dirty. Create a fun journey for yourself as you watch the seedlings go from flowers to produce. Here are some of the most prominent benefits of gardening for seniors:

A Fun Way to Stay Active

Getting out and tending to your garden keeps your body moving, which is a fun and simple way to stay active:

[Garden For Health - Benefits Of Gardening Exercise \(gardeningknowhow.com\)](http://gardeningknowhow.com)

According to the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, for Adults aged 65 years and older, Moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activities such that there is an accumulation of at least 150 minutes per week is needed (or about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.) Mowing the lawn, raking leaves and gardening are great outdoor tasks that can help meet requirements for moderate physical activity:

[Adults 65+ – 24-Hour Movement Guidelines \(csepguidelines.ca\)](http://csepguidelines.ca)

Nutritional Benefits of Growing Your Own Food

Nothing beats garden-fresh vegetables. The best part of growing your own food.....Anything you plant will double as a nutritious snack — which can save you a trip to the grocery store. Try to start simple. Some fruits and vegetables are more common to grow than others.

Benefits Of Gardening In A Senior Living Community



At the Pioneer's Haven senior living community, we offer numerous spots for all your gardening needs.

Community Gardening Has Social Benefits

Making new friends and enjoying a common interest can surely make every day brighter. Gardening groups, like our Pioneer's Haven Garden Club, offer a way for people to connect with nature and each other, making it a great way to socialize. Connecting with other members of a gardening group allows people to receive social support and contributes positively to the lives of others.

Community Gardening Creates An Attractive Landscape

A well-designed landscape creates an attractive environment. Features such as planted trellises and trees create a shady, relaxing respite for the area's residents. Trellises can also be planted with ornamentals like flowering vines or with edible crops like tomatoes, beans or grapes.

Gardening in a community is a fun group activity that has the added bonus of sprucing up the area around you for you and your neighbors. Your neighbors will thank you!

At the Pioneer's Haven, we have gardens, planter boxes and a community gardening club. Collaborative gardens are a great way to get to know your neighbors while bonding over a common past time.

The community garden, is grown and nurtured by staff, residents and garden club members.

Grow with us

If you or a loved one are considering moving to a senior living community, explore the many benefits of Pioneer's Haven. With maintenance-free living, you can spend your extra time tending your garden and meeting new friends. Our community has a wide array of amenities, including community gardening. To get started, call 306-834-5255 or visit www.pionerhaven.ca to learn more!

Indoor Gardening Starter Guide

Ready for indoor gardening?

Get started with these easy-to-grow vegetables, fruits and herbs. For plants requiring full sun, consider adding an indoor grow light to ensure success!

Peppers

6-12 hours daily



Keep soil slightly damp



Choose a pot with a drainage hole



Use a heating mat to keep the plants warm



Eat alone or with dip, add to salads or soups

Lettuce

12+ hours daily



Always keep soil damp



Consider a hydroponic setup



Feed a liquid, organic fertilizer after each harvest



Salads, smoothies, or as is

Carrots

6-8 hours daily



Keep soil damp



At least 8-12 inches deep



Choose a light, loose soil



Eat raw or roasted, add to salads or soups

Celery

2-4 hours daily



Always keep soil damp



Choose a pot with a drainage hole



Tie growing stalks together to prevent toppling



Top with something tasty or use the leaves for salad or soup

Indoor Gardening Starter Guide

Radishes



6-8 hours daily



Keep soil slightly damp



Choose a light, loose soil



Harvest when 1-2 inches in diameter

Eat alone or with dip, add to salads



Tomatoes



12 hours daily



When soil becomes dry



Add stakes or supports as the plant grows

Lightly tap flowers to spread pollen



Caprese salad (or any salad, really!), alone or with dip

Mint



3-4 hours daily



Keep soil slightly damp



Choose light soil with peat moss



Prune regularly to encourage new growth



Flavor tea or mixed drinks, use as seasoning in many dishes

Citrus



8 hours daily



When soil is nearly dry



Choose a pot with a drainage hole

Use fertilizer for citrus trees



Eating alone, flavor drinks, healthy dessert

