

Safe Gardening

More than 100 million people in America refer to themselves as gardeners. Of these millions, many are susceptible to injuries or illnesses connected to gardening. Gardening may seem to be a safe hobby, and for the most part, it is. ERs treat more than 400,000 injuries each year related to outdoor garden tools or awkward movement.

Some things to remember are:

1. Check the Ground Below

Before starting your gardening , it is a good idea to know where you're digging. The ground beneath you may not be safe. There may be utility lines below the surface of your yard.

2. Wear Gloves

Garden gloves are one of the best ways to protect yourself when gardening. Gloves with a rubber coating will help you avoid burns from fertilizer or pesticides and scrapes from sharp objects. They can also protect you from fungi, bacteria and poisonous plants. Gloves can also protect you from tetanus.

3. Perform Warm-Up Exercises

It is good to do some warm-up exercises before spending time in your garden. Gardening can affect your body in the same way that a moderate-intensity workout can. In addition to providing vegetables and beautiful flowers, gardening provides health benefits, especially for older adults. These benefits may include lower blood pressure, exercise, memory care, motor skills, social benefit, stress relief and improved immune system.

4. Avoid Repetitive Movements

Prolonged and repetitive movements, like digging, raking, trimming, pruning, and planting may strain your muscles. Switch your activities every 15minutes and take breaks. Changing your tasks will allow you to work different muscle groups.

5. Banish Back Bending

When performing any activity, it important to protect your back. Not doing so could case muscle spasms or a more serious injury. Kneeling instead of bending will put less strain on your back. For extra comfort, consider wearing a kneepad.

6. Check Your Lifting

Lifting heavy objects can cause strain on your back. When lifting heavy objects use your legs and knees and not your back.

7. Block the Sun

Whether its hot or cold, the sun's powerful rays can burn your skin. Experts advise you to apply sunscreen that provides an SPF of a least 15. Wearing a hat is wise.

8. Watch Out for Pests

While gardening, look out for pests that could harm you. Be careful of ticks, wasps, mosquitoes, snakes, fire ants and fleas. After a day of gardening, check your clothes and body for insects.

9. Protect Your Eyes and Airway

Although working in your garden may not cause an asthma attack allergies to flare up, there may be things in your garden that can get in your eyes and nose. For protection, wear a surgical face mask.

10. Stay Hydrated

Sometimes your body may experience dehydration before you start to feel thirsty. Be sure to keep water near you in the garden.

11. Tool Safety

Lock garden tools away in a secure area and never leave electrical equipment plugged in when not in use. Keep chemicals like weed killer and fertilizer out of the reach of small children, and always keep them in their original container.

