



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

### **Hardin County Extension News Release**

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### **Gardening is good for you, but sometimes it hurts!!**

*By Carol McKinley, OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer*

*Hardin County* – As a passionate gardener, I know that gardening is good for me in many ways! I always feel better after spending some time outdoors digging in the dirt. Even if it's just doing a bit of weeding here and there. But as I get older, gardening gives me some aches and challenges that it didn't when I was younger. That doesn't mean I have to stop doing one of my favorite activities. I just have to be smarter now.

Pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying, even the simple act of bending down and getting back up can all be painful. My common go-to strategies include my faithful knee pad I got from Ace Hardware many years ago, gloves (of course), sitting on an upside down 5 gallon bucket, over-the-counter medication, scooting around from spot to spot on my bottom, and exercise.

If you're like me - old and into gardening, here's my suggestion - exercise! Exercise can be a very effective way to manage pain, strengthen your body, increase your flexibility, stretch and relax tight muscles, and reduce the chance of injury. We're so lucky to have the Hardin County YMCA. I take weight lifting classes 3-5 times a week. I also started taking the chair yoga class twice a week this year, and I love it. Between the weight lifting and the yoga, I'm strengthening my body, increasing my flexibility, stretching muscles, and reducing the risk of injuries.

But still, I have pains. Even as I write this, my lower back is hurting. (But that may be from the jet ski riding I did this weekend...) Anyway, I'm not going to stop gardening (or riding the jet ski)! There ARE strategies and tools out there for making it easier to garden as we age, or if we have chronic pain. On Monday, June 25, the Hardin County Master Gardeners and the Men's Garden Club will offer a free program for any interested gardeners and would-be gardeners on the strategies and tools that make gardening easier and accessible to all. The speaker is Laura

Akgerman. She is the Disability Services Coordinator for Ohio AgrAbility Program and the Ohio State University Extension. The title of her talk is "Gardening with Arthritis and Gardening as we Age." Right up my alley!

Everyone is invited to the Friendship Gardens of Hardin County, a collection of educational gardens in Kenton, Ohio open and free to the community. Its address is 960 Kohler Street located right behind Harco Industries. There are currently 18 different garden areas including some of the following: rain garden, butterfly garden, children's garden, sedum garden, annual garden, rose garden, herb garden, vegetable garden, shade garden, oriental garden, and an alpine garden.

Don't forget to come Monday, June 25 to learn some strategies for us older folk who love to garden. There will be refreshments and the gardens will be open for touring at 6:30. Laura's talk will start at 7:00, followed by door prizes. A few of the prizes are some adaptive tools that Laura will demonstrate how to use at the end of the program.