

Gardening:

"I went down to the grove of walnut trees and out to the valley to see the new spring growth, to see whether the grapevines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom." Song of Solomon 6:11 NLT

Spring gives us such pleasure as we see everything coming back to life, and it's a reminder of the new life that we have through Christ's resurrection. Gardening is a pleasure for most of us, but it is also an exercise and can lead to injuries. Raking, mulching, planting, trimming and digging are good physical activity yet can result in pain and stiffness in our neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist, knees and back if we over-extend ourselves. To enjoy the flowers, vegetables and fruits without pain try these tips from Dr. William Madosky, a St. Louis chiropractor.

Treat gardening as a sport: Warm up and stretch the muscles before beginning.

Be realistic: Plan your work carefully to avoid injury. Set a moderate pace and time schedule to allow enjoyment of the task and minimize potential injuries.

Remember good body mechanics: When lifting heavy bags of dirt or mulch keep your back straight back, bend your knees, lift with the legs, and hold objects close to your body. If shoveling, lift the dirt and turn the entire body to empty it – don't twist.

Change it up: Use different muscle groups and minimize the repetitive stress placed on joints and extremities by frequently changing activities.

Use a cushion, stool, or small bench when weeding: The support helps reduce stress placed on knees and spine from gardening movements.

Take frequent breaks: By stopping to stretch, getting a drink or just enjoying the progress every half hour, you minimize your chance of injury or dehydration.

Stop gardening if fatigued or in pain: That "one last thing" when tired leads to injury. If pain occurs, stop! If pain persists, apply ice to the affected area for 15-20 minutes at a time to reduce inflammation. DO NOT USE HEAT – it increases the inflammatory process. If pain persists, contact the doctor.

We can spend time in the garden appreciating the glory of God's creation, while caring for our body at the same time.

(Source: www.drmadosky.com/articles.html)

References / Resources:

www.nationalgardenmonth.org/index.php?page=educators – information on gardening for youth, educators, and communities on the benefits of gardening

<http://gardening.about.com/od/gardenprimer/ss/NewGarden.htm> - information on multiple topics of gardening from about.com part of New York Times Company

<http://communitygarden.org/learn/> - American Community Gardening Association has resources to help initiate community gardens