

Aging and Gardening Panel Discussion, May 8

Panel members – Barbara Blossom Ashmun, Patty Cassidy, Carolyn Guinther

Expectations

- Accept that your own garden does not need to be perfect; see the beauty even when it is ‘imperfect’
- Adopt a more relaxed attitude about gardening
- Allow others to help; cultivate qualified helpers
- Hire out heavy work, such as services to blow in mulch

General Practice

- Break up gardening sessions into shorter blocks of time
- Stretch and warm up before gardening
- Rotate activities – don’t stick with one task for too long
- Take a ‘power nap’ as needed
- Install handrail in steep areas to avoid falling

Plants

- Select plants that offer at least two seasons of interest
- Use shrubs in lieu of perennials to reduce maintenance
- Use ground covers to suppress weeds

Soil

- Rather than digging down to make new beds, build up by adding organic materials (leaves, wood chips, coffee grounds, etc.) which may take one or two years but saves your back
- Mulch with organic materials to suppress weeds; for a large area, hire mulch blowing service

Tools

- Use light weight watering hose
- Use ergonomic hand tools that keep your wrist straight when working
- Keep frequently used tools handy, perhaps in a tool bucket or in a holster on your waist
- Wrap insulation foam around bucket handle to reduce strain on your hand
- Spray paint tool handles to make them easy to spot