

## THE GARDEN



Well spring appears to have finally arrived and is the time to start enjoying the garden.

The upkeep of a garden for someone with Fibromyalgia is not an easy task so here are some ideas to make life a little easier.



Weeding and digging the garden, mowing the lawn etc., is impossible for most of us. If you have a partner or someone else who can do this for you, then that's great, but everyone has, so how can we make things easier for us to be able to do our bit out there, and enjoy the fruits of our labour.



Firstly, make for garden FM friendly. Have raised flower beds built so you do not have to bend too much, or have lots of lovely pots, there are so many sizes and colours to choose from to suit every garden and pocket. This will cut down the amount of weeding required and keep the flowers or vegetables contained in smaller areas.

Use general potting compost for the pots and raised beds, to make the soil easy to dig over and plant in. (Easier to pull out any weeds as well) Use small light weight long handled forks and trowels to assist with the digging over.

Hanging baskets are also great and come either as a single item you can hang anywhere, or buy a 'tree' that holds around four baskets. The height of the baskets makes them easy to reach, and they can be removed to plant out etc.

A greenhouse is great in the garden whether for flowers or vegetables. They start from around 4' by 6' so many gardens can accommodate one somewhere. You can have a seat in there, and build the shelves to suit you, to take the seedling trays, and pots.

If you don't want to go to the expense of a permanent greenhouse try out the lightweight 6' x 4' PVC type you can buy with plastic tubes that just slide together, or the smaller version that gives you 3 or 4 shelves. These are easy to construct and can be taken down for the winter with ease.

Mowing the lawn can also be a problem if you don't have someone to help. Taking away the grass and replacing with stones, wood chips or slabs, can be a good idea, and you can still plan the garden to be full of flowers and shrubs etc., to suit you, and make the garden FM user friendly. This can be an expensive option initially, but if you plan to stay in your property

I've recently viewed a garden that has been specifically designed for ease of maintenance for a 'not so fit' lady. The garden is quite small but has been opened up by replacing the grass with patio slabs and stones. A raised flower bed with a rockery in the corner has been built, with a small easily maintained water feature.

A summer house has also been incorporated with a wide door and a slope to access, so that a mobility scooter can be driven straight in, and left on charge in there.

This transformation has made what was a problem garden that just caused the owner stress at trying to maintain it, into an idyllic little garden. 'Its like my own little peaceful park' she says' that can be enjoyed from outside, or just from looking out of the patio doors.'