

The Trellis No-Sweat Guide to Planting

Bad Back or Weak Grip? No Problem. Gardening doesn't have to be a chore, or hard work. You needn't strain your back lifting heavy pots and sacks of compost - and stooping is optional. Follow our guide to taking the strife out of your gardening life:

- First, where are you going to plant? With a few simple changes, it's possible to make your garden set up more user-friendly and comfortable. Instead of bending to reach pots on the ground, use two planters, setting one upside down with another one on top to raise its height and so reduce need for stooping. Or stack several pots until the top one reaches a comfortable height for you. You can stack pots from the ground and work from a sitting position or stack on top of a potting bench or other surface to save your neck from strain.
- Heavy pots are a recipe for back pain or hernia trouble. How are you going to move them next season if they are too heavy? Opt for plastic or resin pots instead of terracotta. Fill the bottom with polystyrene chips instead of the traditional drainage crocks. Consider placing your pot on a saucer or wooden trivet with wheels/castors on the bottom for ease of movement.
- Decant your compost or growing medium into small manageable bags or pots rather than lugging around the large unwieldy bags in which it is sold.
- Plant up your container using a long-handled trowel or bulb-planter, to reduce the need for over-reaching that may cause strain. You can find extension handles for common tools in most garden centres.
- Watering – again, we often strain our backs or arms trying to direct water at distant plants towards the back of a border or in a high hanging basket. As an alternative to buying expensive 'wand' attachments for hoses, you can insert a 3-foot cane into the end of the hose so increasing its reach without the need to bend or overstretch.
- A mulch on the top of the soil or compost will reduce the need for watering – and keep weeds down. You can use pebbles, garden compost, bark chips, cocoa shells, biodegradable corn starch film, or even newspaper.