



York County Area Agency on Aging

E- Newsletter

April 2023

How To Celebrate Spring with an Aging Loved One

Ah, spring! There's just something about it that makes you want to celebrate. And who is more deserving of joy and celebration than the special senior in your life? After a long and tedious winter, you both deserve some relief. The solution to shaking off the winter blues may lie in some of our fun senior activity ideas below — ones that you can enjoy together!

Spring activities for older adults

- **Feeding birds, ducks, or geese** by a pond. Alternately, you can fill bird feeders and watch the wildlife they attract.
- **Planting a garden**, just some border flowers or potted herbs and plants.
- **Doing spring cleaning**. Tasks for older adults may include sorting through items to donate or discard.
- **Walking outside**, preferably around the neighborhood or an attractive park.

- **Trying new spring recipes** made with fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs – maybe even some from the garden!
- Relaxing outside on a porch, deck, or patio.
- **Doing crafts related to spring**, such as painting birdhouses or making spring decorations.
- **Exercising outdoors.** For aging adults, this may consist of simple stretches or other exercises that are easy on the joints, or that correspond to the person’s level of fitness.
- **Going fishing.** If this is something your loved one enjoyed when they were younger, there’s no reason for them to give it up now as long as you can assist them if needed.
- **People-watching.** Don’t underestimate this timeless activity! Simply observing people at a park, outdoor café, or another public place is especially good for older adults whose health limits other forms of entertainment.
- **Attending an open-air concert, movie, or event.** Many municipalities offer these shows during the warmer months – sometimes free of charge!
- **Visiting a farmer’s market.** This is a wonderful opportunity for your loved one to peoplewatch, shop, and enjoy the fresh flavors and scents of spring.
- **Picking flowers.** There is nothing more quintessential to springtime than flowers. Whether they’re picked from your loved one’s garden or bought at a farmer’s market, displaying various blossoms around the house is sure to bring smiles for days!

Spring is a time of renewal, and taking the time to celebrate can bring you and your loved one closer (or closer to their caregiver). The sense of pride, accomplishment, and rejuvenation that can accompany the activities listed here cannot be overstated. But don’t be afraid to add your own items to the list as well! By making your spring celebration individual and personal, you can help older adults feel even more important, valued, and loved. - *Institute for Aging*

**To all of our volunteers
who do so much for our older
community members...**



THANK YOU

Growing Older, Growing Smarter

By Marty Ross

Being retired has its advantages: You have all day to spend in the garden, if you want to. But after a couple of hours, you're free to take a break. Getting holes dug, weeding flowerbeds, and tending a vegetable garden start to seem less urgent when you're 65, and not 35, and you really don't have to be back at work on Monday morning. But older people still have choices to make.

"I've had to adjust my attitude," says Dean Failor, 72, who lives in South Beach, OR, and has been gardening for half a century. He grows broccoli, sugar snap peas, and a few other crops, but he plants in raised beds now, not long rows, so the weeding is easier, and he buys produce at a local farmers' market to supplement his harvest. He grows roses, too, but he sticks to low-maintenance varieties that are suited to his climate. "There comes a time when you just have to say 'I'm not up to all that,'" Failor says. "'Easy-care' is the watchword."

Gardening is good for you, of course, and research confirms that the health benefits are striking for those who have reached the age of AARP eligibility. Routine activity — such as a little bit of gardening every day — reduces the risk of stroke and promotes a longer, healthier life, according to results of a study published last fall by *the British Journal of Sports Medicine*. The researchers studied a group of 4,000 60-year-olds in Stockholm, Sweden, for 12 years. Those with the highest level of daily physical activity had a 27 percent lower risk of heart attack or stroke, and a 30 percent reduced risk of death from all causes.

The challenges of gardening are complicated by physical limitations as we age, but "we accommodate these changes by adding some helpful tools or altering how we go about tasks," says Barb Kreski, director of horticulture services at the Chicago Botanic Garden, where the Buehler Enabling Garden is designed to inspire older gardeners and people with physical limitations to keep their hands in the dirt. Hanging baskets are rigged on pulley systems so they can be lowered to be worked on. Levers, not knobs, are used on gates and faucets. The plantings emphasize dwarf and low-maintenance trees and shrubs.

Kreski recommends raised beds and large pots and planters, which can be worked without bending over, and tools that make gardening easier. Soaker hoses and drip-irrigation systems eliminate the effort of dragging hoses around. A garden cart lets you haul tools and supplies easily.

Paying a little more for well-made, ergonomically designed tools should be part of everyone's retirement plan. Failor uses a garden fork instead of a spade for many tasks. "Not only is the fork lighter, but it doesn't cut stuff," he says. When it comes to weeding, his favorite is the Cape Cod Weeder, a hand-held tool with a sharp, hook-shaped blade. Scaling back is also important. "Note what you enjoy most, as well as what you dread doing," Kreski says.

Gardeners of all ages should wear a hat and sunscreen, Kreski says, and older gardeners, especially, should wear gloves. "Invest in a pair of really good gloves that you will keep on no matter what the task," she says. "Cuts and abrasions in the skin of the hands are an invitation to infection."

The late Jim Wilson, co-host of *The Victory Garden* for 13 years and author of more than a dozen gardening books, kept at his hobby for all of his 85 years. His book, *Gardening Through Your Golden Years*, is full of good advice for what he called "seasoned gardeners." When he was 78, he described his approach as "slow, steady, safe, and thoughtful, ... not a bad approach to any task, and especially gardening."

Wilson says that one of the things he learned was to recruit help for heavy garden jobs and mowing. He adapted his gardening style to suit his situation, and refined the plant selection in his garden.

"I would like to convince tidy gardeners that it is OK to slack off, to stop trimming shrubs into little green meatballs, to rely more on mulching and less on weeding," Wilson said. His goal was not to talk anyone into giving up gardening as they grow older, but to convince them that they should, above all, keep it up.

Click the flyer to enlarge.

Making a Difference
in the lives of people with Dementia

Thursday, May 4th, 2023 8:00am-12:30pm
Church of the Open Door East York
4075 E. Market St, York, PA 17402
Option for In-Person or Virtual

Our keynote speaker is Author, Caregiver & Motivational Speaker,
Loretta Woodward Veney
"The Joy of Keeping Those with Dementia Engaged Throughout the Journey"

FREE seminar for family caregivers no matter the stage of dementia.
Registration for this seminar is required.

Visit our Facebook page: Making a Difference in Dementia Care.
To register or for more information call 717-843-1504 or
email makingadifferenceindementia@gmail.com

Our Community Partners Include:

Go Fish!

If you are 65 years of age or older, you are eligible for reduced rates on fishing licenses. Fishing licenses are \$11.90 (lifetime fishing licenses are \$51.90) Proof of age is required. For additional information, contact:

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
1601 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17106
Phone: 717-705-7800

Resource Updates Now Available

We have recently updated our York County Nursing Home Guide, Area Food Bank Listings, and Resources You Can Use (formerly Facts You Can Use). Click below to go to our Resources page

[Resources](#)

Health & Wellness Classes

Spring & Summer Classes Include:
A Matter of Balance
Healthy Steps for Older Adults
Healthy Steps In Motion
Chronic Pain Self-Management
Diabetes Self-Management

[Class Schedule](#)

Hot Off The Press!

New Horizons, the official newspaper of the York County Area Agency on Aging, spring/summer edition is now available online and at your favorite library, or senior center.

Includes articles on Nursing Home Debt Tactics, Multigenerational Living, Medicare Insulin Costs, Foster Grandparents, Stopping Driving, Ageism, and more...

[New Horizons Online](#)

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About York County Area Agency on Aging

The primary focus of the York County Area Agency on Aging is to provide education, advocacy and coordination of community-based services to empower older adults to maximize their independence and quality of life.

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