KINGMAN IS GROWING! Column

GARDENING FOR THE MATURE ADULT
By Sherry Kelley, Kingman Area Master Gardener

Do we have to quit gardening as we get older? The answer is a big NO! We, as older gardeners, just have to adjust our gardening techniques.

RAISED BEDS are best constructed in the winter months as the soil will have time to settle before the spring planting of flowers and vegetables. The beds should have 12-18 inches of good soil (a mixture of top soil and compost) for the roots of the plants and the beds should face north to south for equal sun exposure.

The construction of the beds can be as simple as bales of hay pushed together or simple dig a hole in the bales, fill with compost and then plant. Another simple raised bed concept is to stack tires on top of another to your height requirement and fill with top soil and compost. Do not lean or sit on the sides, as you may dislodge the tires.

A more complex construction with lumber, railroad ties, or concrete bricks may be made but you may need help from friends for construction. All lumber and wood products should be untreated, as chemicals in the wood products can cause damage to your plants as it leaches from the wood. Concrete bricks, over a period of time, can raise the PH of the soil. The raised beds should be as high as you are comfortable with. You may want them high enough to sit or lean against while you are working in your garden. The beds should be two to four feet across for easy accessibility on all sides.

TOOLS. Use a long or short handle weeder (the V at the end) for ground weeds. Look for tool with padded grips, light weight, and ease of handling. Check with your local nurseries, home
improvement and Internet stores for shorter tools. You may want to investigate the use of children’s
gardening tool sets or miner’s shovels, as they are shorter than the normal long handle shovels.

**WATERING.** A hose can be used, if you need to sit on the side of the beds. Soaker horses are
another option. The soaker hoses come in various lengths, so plan your raised beds accordingly. All you
have to do is attach your hose to the end of the soaker hose and let it run for deep watering flowers and
vegetables. Timers are also available to attach from your watering hose at your outdoor water source.
Drip irrigation is another option, though it is more expensive. Drip irrigation can be set on timers, but
plants still have to be checked for the proper amount of water needed. The timer will need to be adjusted
as temperatures and weather changes.

**PATIO GARDENING.** Large or small pots on the patio may be what you are looking for. Pots
come in all sizes and shapes and can go with any patio decor. Make sure the pots have holes in the
bottom for good drainage and check for moisture often as pots dry out more rapidly in the summer than in
ground plants. The large pots can be mounted on rollers for easy moving. With patio gardening, you may
also have some shade plants, if you a cover on your patio.

The adjustment to gardening can be another new experience in our gardening lives.

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