

# 11 DIY Gardening Projects for Older Gardeners



Gardening isn't just for the young – it's a fun activity that can work for everyone, regardless of age. For those of us who've seen a few more seasons, bending down to tend to our floral friends might not be as easy as it used to be. Fear not! We've dug up 11 gardening projects that keep the fun alive without requiring a visit to the chiropractor afterward.

## 1. Raised Bed Bonanza



Elevate your gardening game, quite literally, with raised beds. They'll massively save your back from the dreaded bend, and they'll also put a stop to those pesky critters who think your veggies are their personal buffet. Think of it like building a fortress to keep out invaders, but for your tomatoes and zucchinis.

## **2. Potting Bench Magic**





Imagine a world where all your gardening tools live in harmony in one spot. Enter the potting bench! It can be a place to pot plants, store your gear, and even display some of your botanical beauties. Potting benches are like organization mixed with functionality in the best possible way. Plus, it's pretty cheap!

### **3. Container Garden Wonderland**



Who said you need a sprawling garden to have a green thumb? Container gardens bring the joy of planting to any space, be it a patio or a windowsill. Mix and match pots of different sizes and colors for a vibrant display. Bonus points for using recycled containers to give them a second life!

## 4. Fairy Garden Fantasy





Unleash your inner child with a fairy garden. These miniature landscapes are perfect for adding a touch of whimsy to your garden or balcony. Put in some tiny houses, furniture, and even miniature plants to make them come alive. Plus, you can change the scenes as seasons change, hosting tiny garden parties, or creating fairy snowscapes!

## 5. Herb Spiral Splendor



Create a spiral herb garden for a striking and space-saving way to grow your favorite seasonings. It's a feast for the eyes and the palate! Fresh basil, thyme, and rosemary at your fingertips without having to go too far. And when the smell hits you, it's like receiving a lovely scented letter from Mother Nature herself, inviting you to cook up a storm.

## **6. Water Features Wonders**





The soothing sound of water can transform any garden into a serene oasis, and installing a small fountain or birdbath doesn't require a degree in landscape architecture. It'll add a focal point for a little peace and maybe a few bird friends. Think of it as creating a spa day for your feathered friends and a zen moment for yourself every time you step outside.

## **7. Sensory Garden Sensation**



Engage all your senses with a sensory garden by planting fragrant flowers and textured leaves. It's a garden that looks, feels, and even sounds good amazing, with the rustle of leaves and the buzz of bees. Every visit feels like a new discovery, where plants like lavender soothe your soul, and the crinkle of leaves will take you on a nostalgic trip down memory lane.

## **8. Vertical Garden Victory**





Only got a little garden space? Don't worry! Trellises, wall planters, and hanging baskets allow you to grow upwards. It's a fantastic way to make the most of limited areas and can turn a bland wall into a lush tapestry of green. This sky-high garden is also a living art piece, proving that the sky's the limit when it comes to green thumbs.

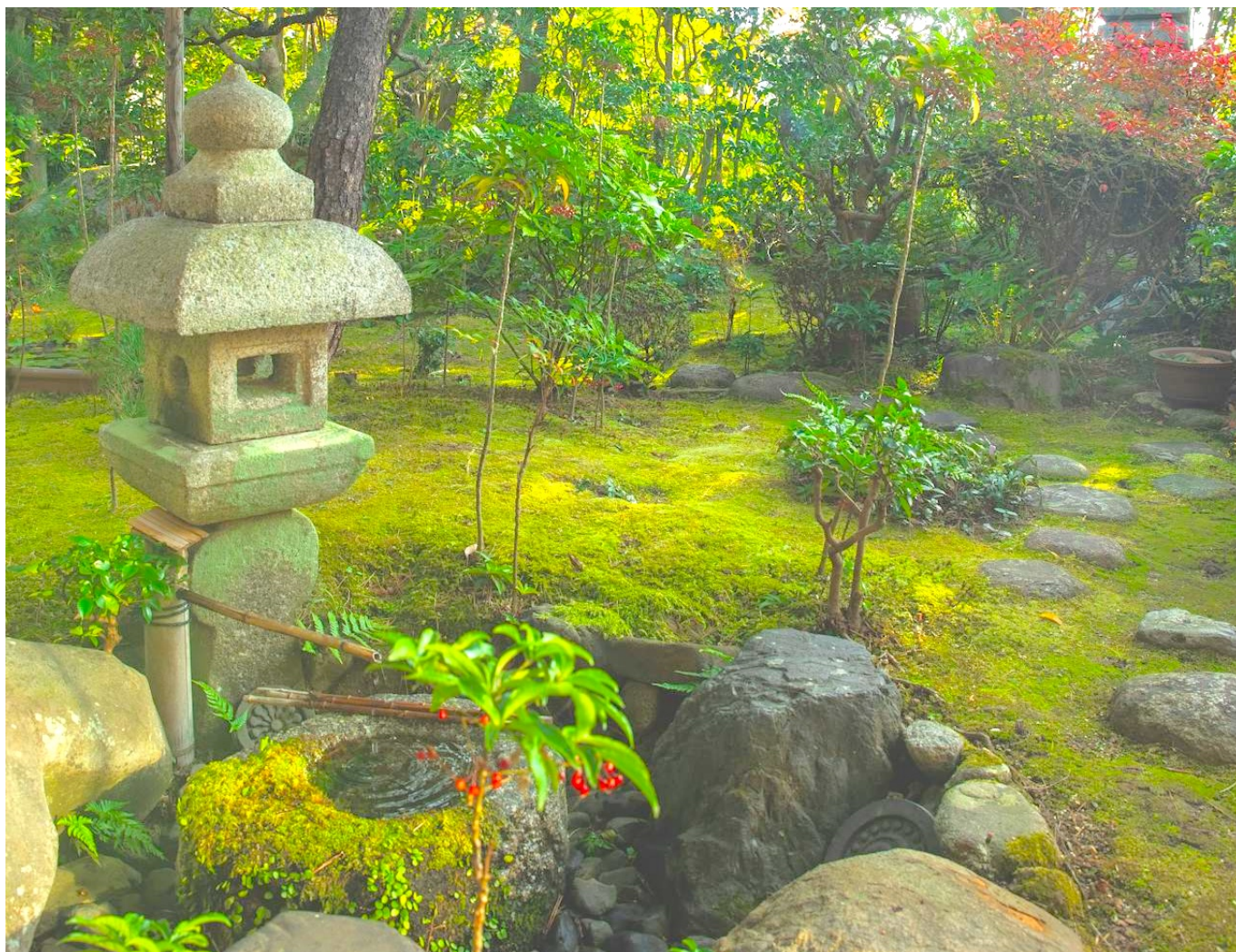
## **9. Pollinator Paradise**



Bees and butterflies play an important in our ecosystem. Plant a selection of nectar-rich flowers to create a pollinator-friendly garden. You're throwing a party for the natural world, and you'll get front-row seats to nature's most beautiful ballet, all while playing a key role in supporting local wildlife.

## **10. Rock Garden Rhapsody**





Low-maintenance rock gardens are perfect for adding texture and depth to your outdoor space. Choose drought-resistant plants for a garden that thrives with minimal fuss to create a rock concert, minus the noise. This rockin' garden is a tribute to resilience, proving that beauty can bloom even in the toughest conditions.

## **11. DIY Garden Decor Delights**





Personalize your garden with DIY decor. From painted rocks to upcycled garden furniture, the possibilities are endless. You can add a touch of personality to your space to make it uniquely yours. Every handmade touch adds a story and soul to your sanctuary, meaning that no two gardens are ever the same.

## The Truth





Gardening doesn't have to be a back-breaking endeavor, nor does it require huge expanses of land. With these 11 DIY projects, anyone can cultivate their passion for planting to create beautiful spaces that are also brimming with personality and ease of access. So, roll up those sleeves and let the dirt-digging, plant-planting fun begin!

[Using Shredded Paper As Garden Mulch](#)

[Garden For Free](#)

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# **5 Reasons to Start a Garden This Spring**





Normally, I don't need to think of reasons to start a garden. I'm intrinsically motivated to start anew each spring.

In the dead of winter, I usually get incredibly excited about the prospect of gardening in March. As soon as the seed catalogs arrive, I start to plan. I dream about the new varieties I want to try as I flip through the glossy magazines and I draw up sketches of my garden beds to decide what I want to plant where. I don't usually need a reason to get excited.

This year is a little different. With the pandemic raging on, lockdowns in effect, and stress levels getting higher every day, I feel disconnected from the things I enjoy—especially gardening. So, to boost my morale, I've been thinking much more intentionally about the reasons to start a garden. It's led me to realize that the reasons don't always have to be the same. They can change and evolve, and they don't always have to fit a specific mold.

## Why You Should Start a Garden This Spring

Thinking about starting a garden this year? There are plenty of good reasons to get growing. Here are a few that I've been thinking about:

**Home-grown lettuce is way cheaper than the grocery store stuff.** The fancy [greens](#) you buy at the grocery store? They're incredibly easy to grow, and many varieties are cut-and-come-again. One tiny seed will net you multiple delicious salads!

**You can share what you grow.** Loneliness has been a recurring theme of this pandemic. You can't visit loved ones. Gatherings are too dangerous, so people have been spending more and more time alone. Sharing what you grow can help you connect with people you otherwise can't spend time with during this time. Sharing sustenance is a wonderful way to show you care.

**It's a great family activity.** These days school closures and adjustments have caused families to spend way more time together. Parents fret about the effect not being in school has on kids, but I say take this time to get into a hobby



together. School will be out this summer anyhow, so spend the time together cultivating a garden. Couples can also use gardening to bond and strengthen their relationship.

**You can grow exotic ingredients.** Going to the grocery store is no longer the safe haven it once was. You can't just pop into different supermarkets to find that one weird ingredient for your favorite [recipe](#). Grow it yourself instead! Love bok choy stir fry? Grow some in your garden.

**To take your mind off of things.** Gardening has a meditative quality. When I'm in the garden, I often forget about everything else. You can't always turn your brain off. Tuning into the world is important. But to have space where you can decompress is incredibly valuable.

What are some of your unconventional reason for starting to garden this spring? What's the one thing that's calling you back? Is it food security? Is it stress relief? Let me know in the comments.

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## 7 Garden Inspection Tasks for Thriving Plants



Why do I bother walking through my garden multiple times a day? Let's talk about my top garden inspection tasks.



We're in the midst of a [heatwave](#) in my neck of the woods and the garden is loving it. The heat-sensitive plants have all bolted and been pulled in favor of heat-loving edibles. I make it a point to visit the garden at least twice every day—even when it's sweltering hot outside. I swear I was sweating just standing there while watering this morning!

No matter how hot it is, though, I make sure to get out there as much as possible.

## Most important garden inspection tasks

At some point, the garden goes into autopilot mode. All that you have to do is make sure your plot gets enough water. In my region, Mother Nature helps with that quite a bit. For those with irrigation systems set up, watering is another task that's on auto.

But even if your garden is doing a-okay, you still need to check on it from time to time. Regular visits are essential for a thriving garden.

And when I talk about checking on your garden, I don't mean a quick pop-by. When I head outside to talk to my plants, I'm there for at least 10-15 minutes. My garden checks consist of thorough visual inspections.

Here are the garden inspection tasks I think are most important:

**Plant stress:** Are any of my plants showing signs of stress? Are they wilting? It may mean they need more water.

**Signs of disease:** Are leaves browning or are my plants looking sickly? The plant might have a disease. If there's any sort of visual anomaly, I also check for signs of pest activity.

**Signs of pest activity:** Some pests (like striped potato beetles) are easy to spot. Their orange carapaces and eggs are

easy to find among lush green foliage. Some pest eggs are hidden on the underside of leaves, so don't forget to check there. Check closely for pests even if there's no visible plant damage. Squish and remove eggs before the bugs ever have a chance to do any damage.

**Water pooling:** Is there an area of your garden where water tends to pool? You might need to reconsider planting in that area since most plants don't do well in waterlogged soil.

**Tall plants:** It's incredible how quickly plants grow at the height of the summer. I swear my [tomatoes](#) shot up several inches overnight. Tall, quick-growing plants like peppers, beans, and tomatoes need support. Upon inspection, pluck suckers from tomatoes and make sure to provide your scraggly plants with support structures like cages or bamboo poles.

**Bolting:** It's an unfortunate side effect of summer heat and plants require your immediate attention. Once you spot bolting, it's possible to save nearby plants that have yet to send up flower stalks by providing extra shade and mulching to cool the soil's surface. If you notice everything has already bolted, the sooner you pull everything, the sooner you can plant something new in the same spot.

**Things that are ready to harvest:** The more often I check on my garden, the sooner I'll notice things that are ready for [harvest](#), which helps to cut down on garden waste.

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## Cooking on the Cheap:



# Snacking from Your Garden



Believe it or not, for me, one of the toughest parts about gardening is figuring out how to utilize the harvest. Often, I find myself sharing the abundance with others because I can't handle it all. When the determinate tomatoes set their fruit all at once, I'm overwhelmed by what to do with them all. When the cucumber plants produce more than I can eat in a week, I panic over how to use them up. A little bit of foresight goes a long way to fully utilize everything in the garden. Canning, dehydrating, and finding other ways to incorporate veggies in all my meals is one way to use up what I pick from the garden, but I don't always have time to plan and prepare foods this way.

Canning requires a fair amount of time, which I don't always have. Quick-pickling is easy and fun, but I couldn't possibly consume all those pickles on my own!

I try to bake, roast, and sauce-up all the vegetables in my

garden, but when the harvest is bountiful, that's not always enough to get through it all. It's taken a lot of practice to prevent waste, but it still happens. I've had to really sink my teeth into meal planning to maximize my returns and minimize wasted produce. Meal planning, in combination with crop planning, is the surest way to avoid disappointment.

Another way that I incorporate fresh vegetables into my diet is by snacking on them. By munching on raw (or cooked if you prefer) veg, I not only incorporate plenty of healthy nutrients in my daily caloric intake, I also use up otherwise tough to cook with veggies.

## Garden Snack Ideas

Here are a few examples of snack ideas along with extra tips for using your harvest:

**Celery:** Whether I'm growing in the garden or snatching some up at the local farm stand, celery is one of my favorite veggie snacks. I love to eat it with peanut butter. If you get sick of snacking on celery snicks, use this veg for flavoring all sorts of dishes, including soups and stews.

**Carrots:** Who doesn't love a freshly picked carrot? Last week, I harvested a patch, and my dogs were close by, eager to delight in this sweet treat. Carrots taste great alone and are the quintessential healthy snack food. Zap them in the food processor if you're in the mood for a more substantial meal and make a carrot slaw for lunch or to accompany your dinner.

**Tomatoes:** When you think of a snack, you're probably not thinking about salads. But a plate of fresh sliced tomatoes, topped with salt, pepper, and bocconcini cheese is a gourmet-style afternoon indulgence. It's the perfect reward for growing those delicious tomatoes, isn't it? Entertaining guests? Make cherry tomato skewers for easy one-handed eating.



**Cucumbers:** These taste great on their own with a little bit of salt and pepper. It's one of the only ways I enjoy eating cucumber – besides inside a sandwich.

**Snap peas:** If I'm not cutting these up to enjoy inside a stir fry, I'm eating them raw along with other fresh veggies.

**Kale:** Bake these low and slow for a few minutes or pop them inside a dehydrator to make kale chips. Adjust the salt content to your liking. Kale chips are a great alternative to regular chips loaded with saturated fat.

**Berries:** If you're lucky enough to grow any type of berry, boy, do you have a snack-worthy fruit on your hands. I've only started growing berries, so my patches are smaller than I'd like and only churn out a few strawberries at a time. How to enjoy a handful of berries as a snack? Eat them as is, or add them to yogurt or ice cream.

For the frugal gardeners, snacking doesn't have to be an expensive pursuit. Avoid costly, highly-processed foods from the grocery store and enjoy the tasty treasures sitting right in front of you!

*What are your favorite ways to enjoy your veggie snacks? Tell me in the comments!*

***Next week, I'll be back with some meal planning tips to help you use what you grow, along with some suggestions of meal planning tools that I love and use frequently.***