



# Enabled Gardening

## Lindy Sheehan

Photo: Lord Kelvin Elementary School

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



*Master Gardener Program*



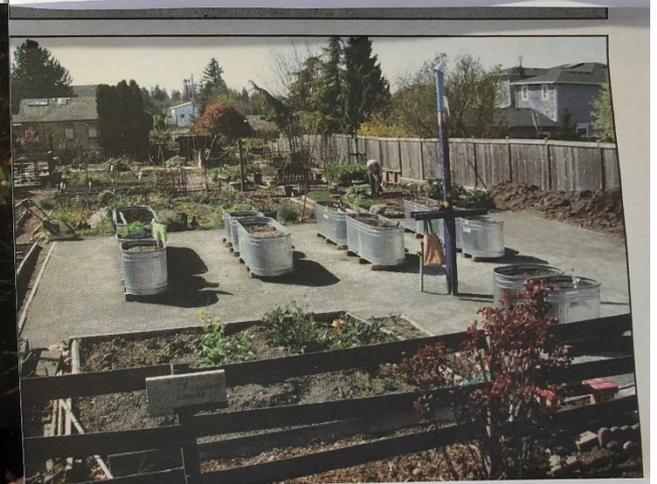
# Introduction and A Little History

- Site coordinator for at Ballard P-Patch for 10 years
- A gardeners need
  - **Jacquie**: used a walker with a seat and loved her roses and tomatoes.
  - **Nadine**: used a cane and later a walker and loved her dahlias, greens and cucumbers.
  - **Vladimir**: mobility and accessibility challenges. Immigrated from Russia, loved his beets and veggies and often seen reading to his wife seated on a bench.
  - **Katie**: required a wheelchair and loved to garden.

# Transition

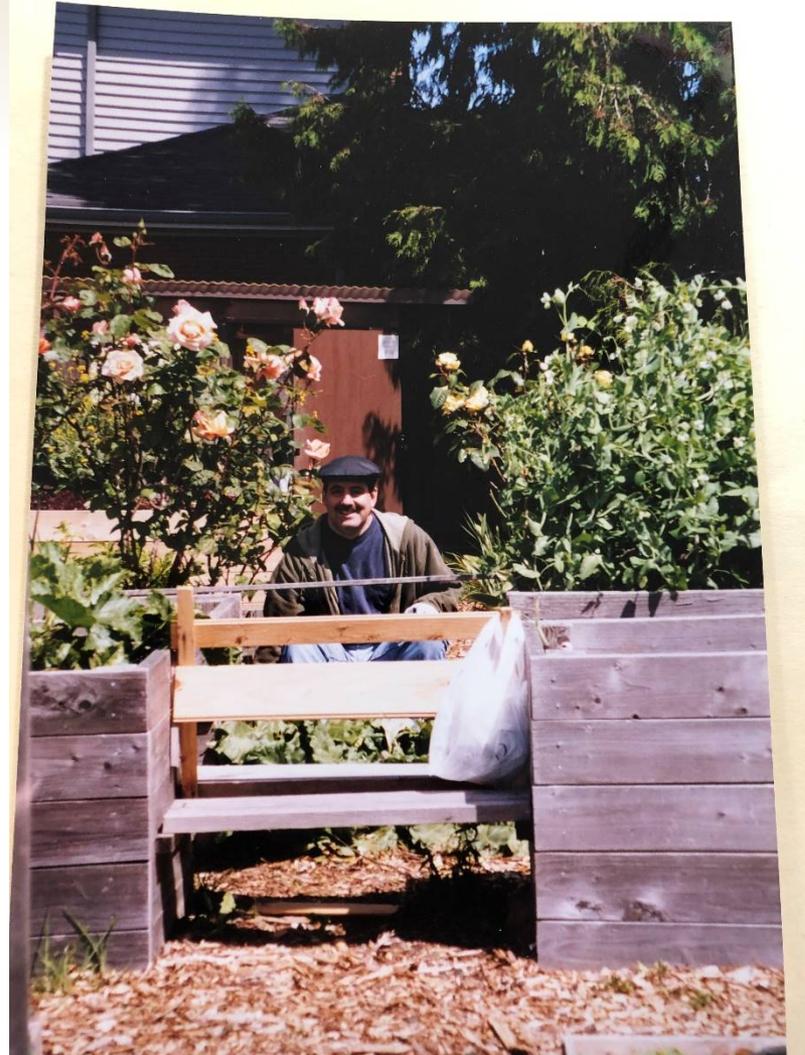
- Fund raising and awarded a grant.
- Tall boxes for waist high gardening transition to a true enabled garden.
- Stock tanks and permeable hardscapes take center stage.
- Modified a few lower height raised beds with a bench for rest and relaxation.
- Added accessible tool storage and water supply.

# Ballard P-Patch Before & After



# Added Bench Between Raised Beds

Vladimir's son Karl  
at his Dad's raised  
beds. Notice the  
built-in bench?



**Gardening is one of America's favorite leisure activities, according to the National Gardening Association. And most gardeners, both novice and experienced agree gardening is good for the body, mind and soul.**

# So Why Do We Garden

- **Your Own Space, Exactly How you Want it** – Gardening is a chance to completely design and create your own space that you have almost full control over, well except the weather that is.
- **It Connects you to Nature** – Gardening allows you to focus on something that will give you a feeling of true achievement and contentment.
- **Source of Healthy, Organic Vegetables** - By growing your own vegetables you know exactly what has gone into them and how they were grown.

# Why We Garden

- **It Lets you Build Relationships** – Building a garden with a friend, family member or partner is a rewarding bonding experience. You'll work together on a project, while learning about each other every step of the way. This makes gardening a great tool for socializing and bonding with people.
- **It Provides Excellent Gifts**-Cucumbers, Zucchini, herbs, flowers and more.

# Why We Garden

- **Good for the Mind** – Scientific evidence has shown that gardening is beneficial to those living, for example, with anxiety and depression.
- **Teaches Integral Life Values** – As most plants and flowers do not grow overnight, one of the most important things you can learn gardening is patience.
- **Good for Your Physical Health**

But those who the effects of arthritis, aging, limited mobility or other physical limitations, gardening can be challenging and sometimes frustrating. Identifying each gardeners individual needs, adapting his/her garden and gardening practices, and utilizing the wide variety of tools and techniques available will ensure that the capabilities of every gardener are maximized.



**Enabling Gardens** allow participants of all ages and abilities to fully participate and enjoy the **gardening** experience. They are designed to be barrier-free and to provide sensory stimulation and physical activities in a non-threatening environment.

Appropriately designed, an enabled garden eliminates any physical barrier to gardening



# Getting Started

- **Time**
- **Mobility**
- **Abilities**
- **Design**

# Time

- Honestly determine how much time you have to garden.
  - Daily or weekly
    - Include preparation time as getting ready to garden, collecting tools, watering etc.
- Creating your garden space.
  - Building or buying.
- Calendar: Planning time to garden.

# Mobility

- How mobile are you? Frank self-assessment will help you create a garden that fits your time and abilities.
- What devices do you use to help increase your mobility? Different devices have different needs and require different garden designs.
- Plan for the future now. Your needs may change from today to tomorrow or year to year.

# Mobility Devices



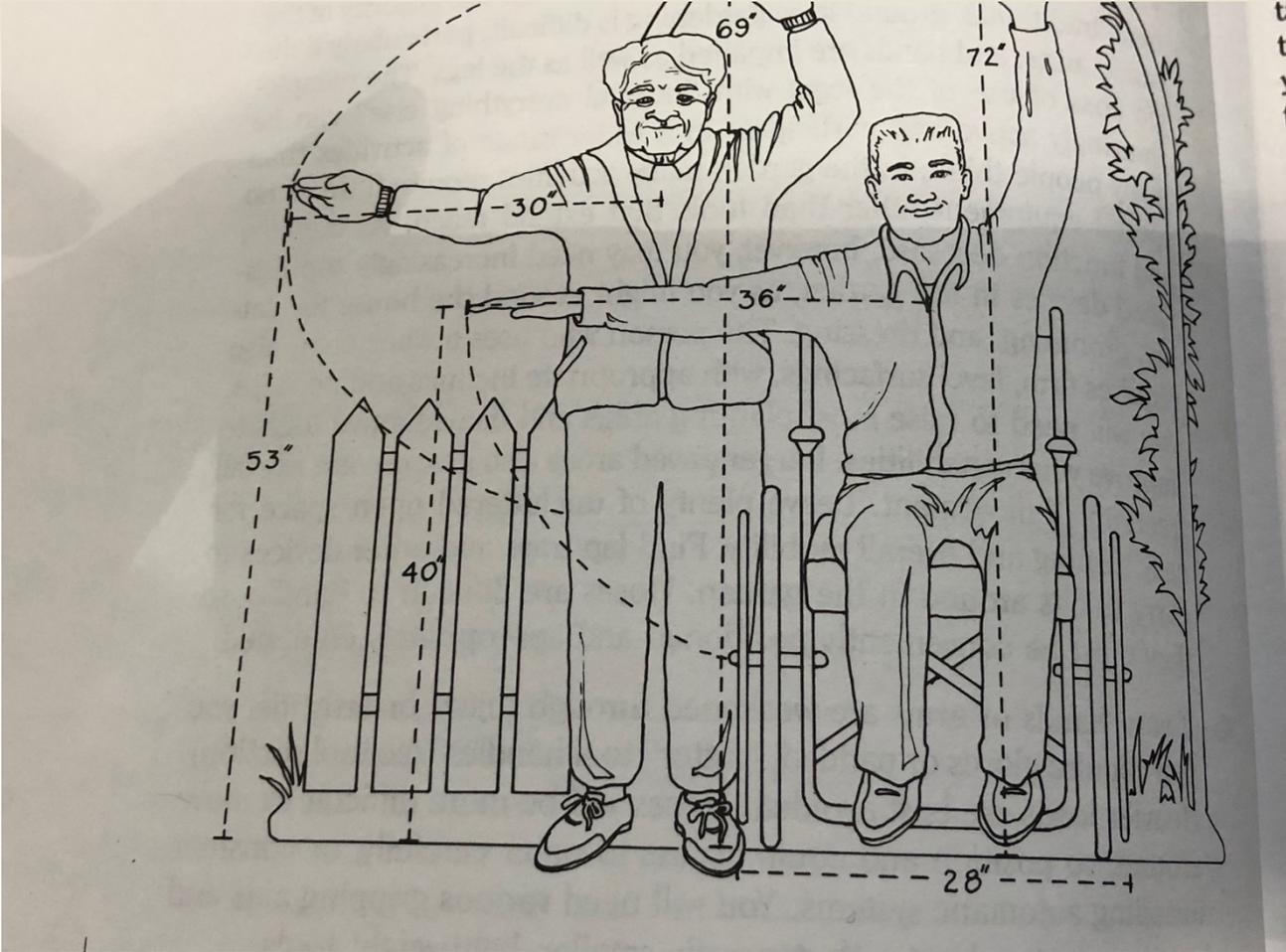
# Abilities

- Be honest about your abilities and limitations.
- Can you bend and are able to get up and down from the floor unassisted?
- Is it easier to stand or be seated when gardening?
- Can you walk only short distances without fatigue?
- What about arm and hand strength?
- Assess your reach. Can you reach without difficulty?

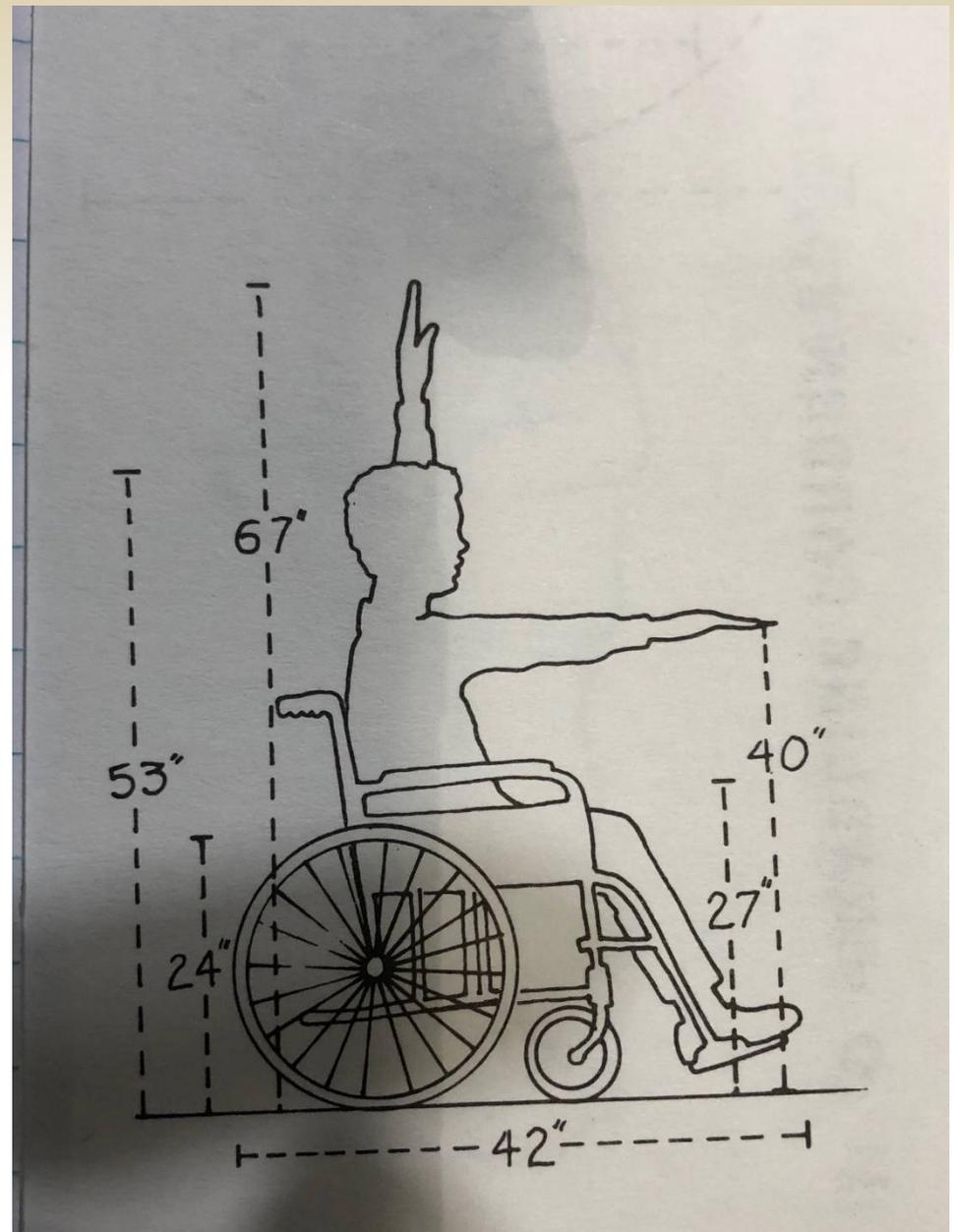
# Abilities

- Compare your mobility to your own abilities and limitations to make better judgments regarding basic garden components, equipment and design.

# Reach assessment



# Reach Assessment



# Design

Create the design based upon:

- Abilities and mobile devices used. Now and later on in life.
- Space and location: How much space do you have? Sun or part shade? *Start small. A little space goes along ways.*
- Time: Again be honest.
- Budget: How much can you afford? Recycle and reuse. And remember to include the plants and tools!

# Design: Location

- Location: Choose a space close to your home based upon hours of full sun and access to water. This can be a balcony, deck, patio, along a fence line to an actual “garden” space.



# Design: Pathways

Surfacing material and style must provide the essential, basic access to and from the garden. With comfortable mobility you have eliminated at least half of the physical barriers to gardening.

- Concrete: brushed, exposed colored aggregate or stamped
- Pavers: various shapes, sizes and colors
- Brick: various sizes and colors
- Decomposed granite
- Crushed stone: water permeable hardscapes
- Compacted soil: dry climates only.



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*Master Gardener Program*





WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*Master Gardener Program*

# Design: Garden “Beds”



Containers



Hanging Baskets



Vertical Gardens



Raised Beds



Table Beds



Straw Bales

# Container Gardens

- Containers can be a variety of shapes and sizes.
- Less space is needed.
- A large variety of plants and veggies are available to grow in containers.
- Add locking wheels or a wheeled platform to allow them to be moved easily.



Cucumber Container Tower



Wagon Container Gardens.  
Easily moved.



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*Master Gardener Program*



## Wheeled Platform

# Hanging Baskets

- Add a pulley system for ease of raising and lowering baskets.
- Many options exist in the marketplace. Even motorized systems.
- They work well for bird feeds too.

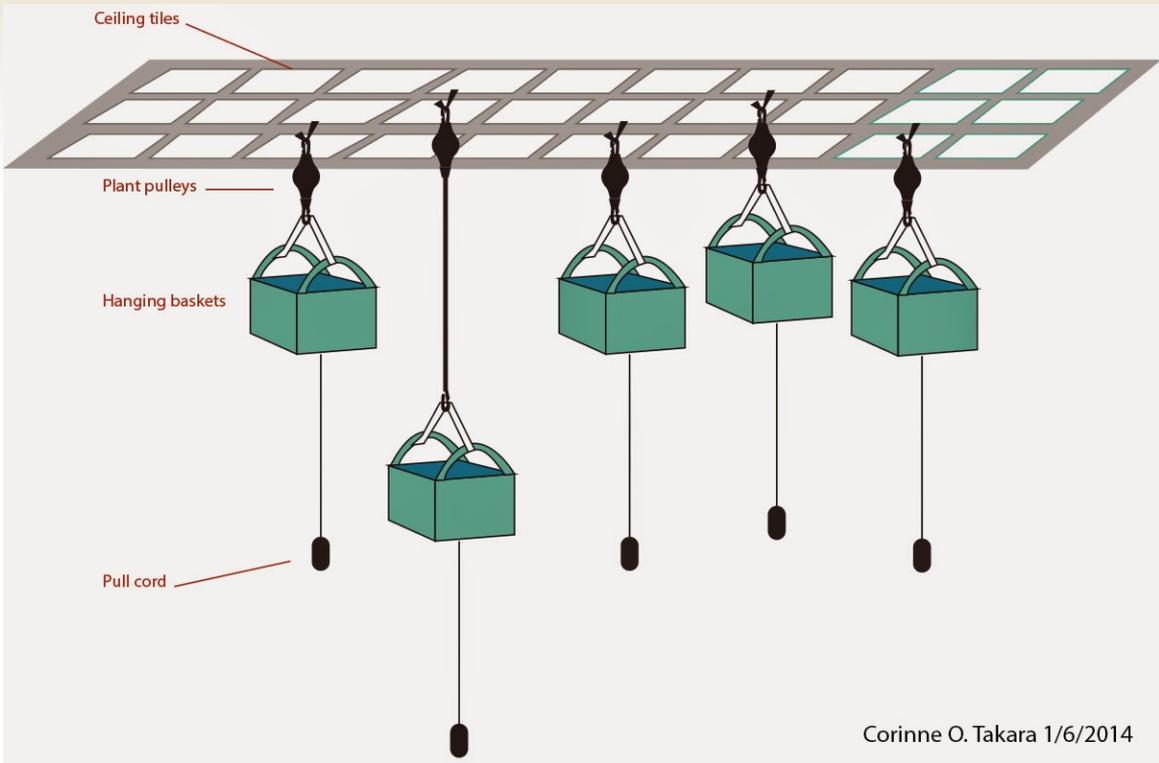
## Hanging Baskets



The baskets around you are on pulleys. With pulleys, you can easily raise and lower baskets to care for your plants.

### Try It!

Create simple pulley systems for your garden. Pick up information at the Tool Shed, located in this garden.



# Vertical Gardens

- Space saving.
- Can be added to a wall or fence.
- A multitude of designs and choices.
  - Gutters, pails, strawberry towers, pallets, ladders and more.
- Plantings are accessible.



- Painted containers mounted to a fence.
- Repurposed old nesting boxes.



Gutter gardens and trellises. Keep the height reachable.



Strawberry containers shown for veggies and herbs.

# Raised Beds and Table Beds

- Can be constructed with various materials and in any width, length and height.
- Can provide seating and resting places.
- Can be combined with vertical gardens at the needed height.
- Stock tanks are another good choice.
- Table gardens allow a seated gardener easy access and reachability.
- Adaptable to square foot gardening.



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*Master Gardener Program*



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

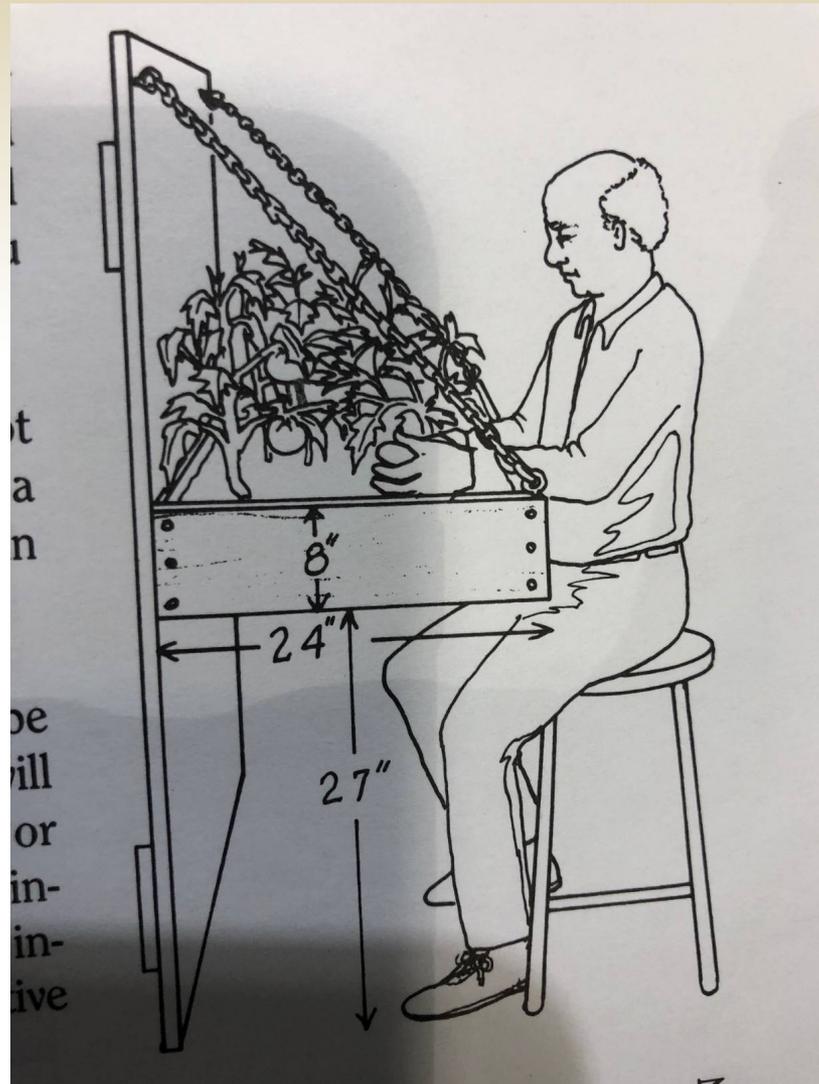
*Master Gardener Program*



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



*Master Gardener Program*



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



*Master Gardener Program*



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*Master Gardener Program*



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



*Master Gardener Program*

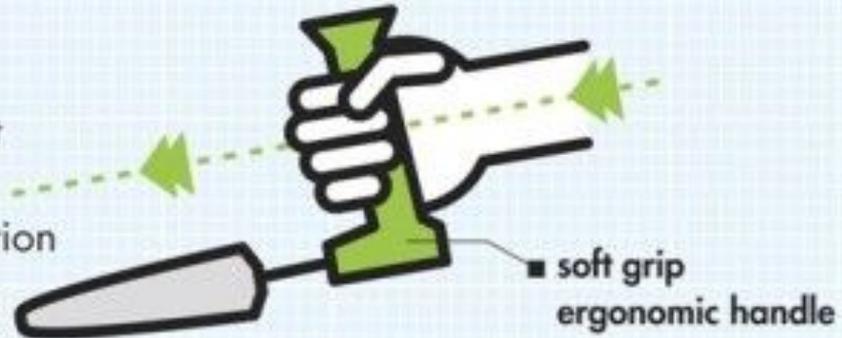
# Tools and Tool Storage

- Choose ergonomically correct tools.
  - Hand tools, seats, kneeling pads etc.
- Base choice on needs
  - Reach, range of motion, flexibility etc.
- Modifications to existing tools
  - Adding D handles, foam pipe insulation, Velcro wrist and arm straps, etc.
- Storage where you need them
  - Mail boxes, a bench with an easy lift seat.

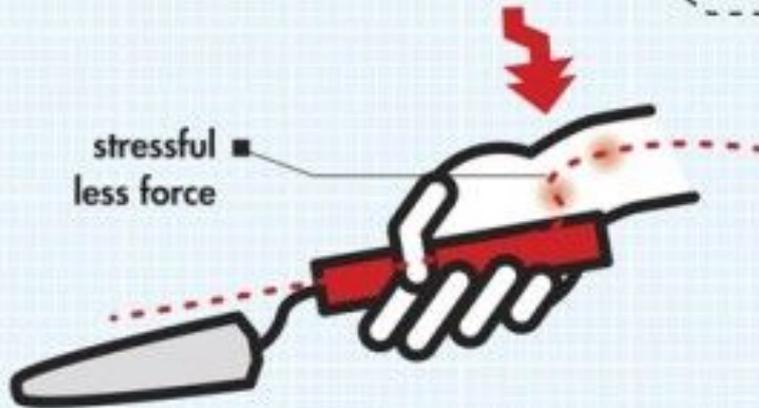


## GOOD

hand and wrist  
in neutral,  
stress-free position



stressful  
less force



## POOR

stretched tendons  
on upper wrist;  
compressed tissues  
on lower wrist;  
callouses on palm





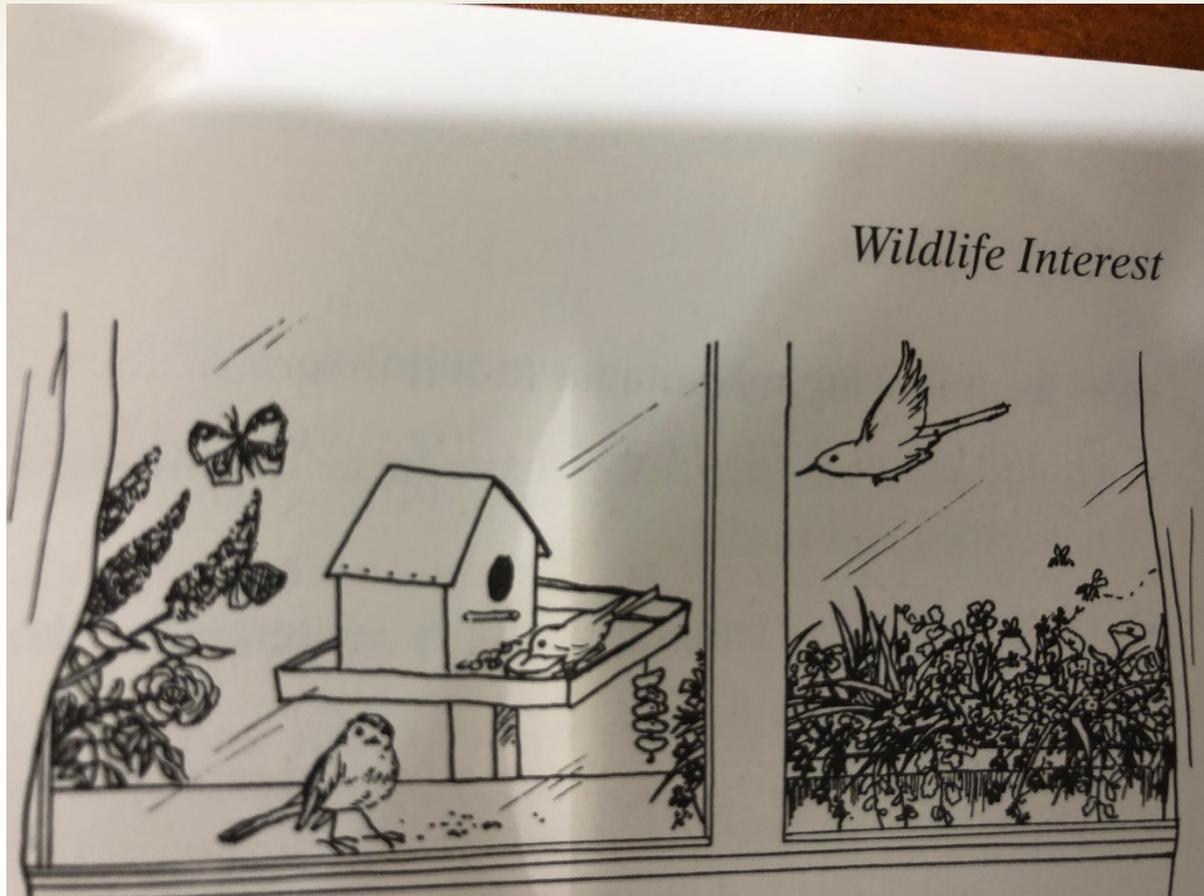


WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*Master Gardener Program*



# Remember the Wildlife Too



# References

- Planting Seeds to Heel: The Benefits of Gardening by Jessalyn Li
- Gardening for Life, WSU Master Gardeners in Spokane County
- The Enabling Garden: Creating Barrier-Free Gardens by Gene Rothert
- Accessible Gardening for People with Physical Disabilities by Janeen r. Adil
- Landscape Design for Elderly and Disabled People by Jane Stoneham and Peter Thoda
- Chicago Botanical Gardens
- Denver Botanical Gardens
- National Gardening Association

**End**

THANK YOU

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



*Master Gardener Program*

