

Wellness in the garden.

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Gardening: calming benefits – **flexibility** + strength:

Best wheelbarrows (builder's barrow better than most).

Correct tool use to minimise damage to body. Weekend warriors are often women these days. Use your feet to push in spades (and keep them sharp – with a bench grinder).

Low impact activities are best – don't run, walk. Use stairs not lifts; carry bags, avoid using the car – walk instead.

Flexibility is essential – when you lose flexibility, your physical decline follows soon after.

Food growing: best veg to grow – Chinese veg easier to grow & trendier to eat – cook in a wok or microwave. Do not overcook them. Grow winter fruiting tomatoes.

Herbs: best to grow: Sage, rosemary & thyme plus GREEK OREGANO. Turmeric is a key for staving off dementia – as are all the other gingers.

Kale is just cabbage, but all cabbage family plants are good for you (cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, floccoli and kale all belong to the same species of plant).

Mediterranean diet is the world's healthiest diet (Paleo diets are a dangerous fad). Lots of veggies, especially legumes like peas, beans etc, whole grains, Mediterranean herbs, plus nuts, some fish, but not too much meat. Manuka honey is really good: Bee Active Manuka blend is cheap (\$23.50 for a 500g jar from Woolworths).

Community gardens are very good especially for swapping produce and for learning how to grow stuff.

Building a vegetable garden – potager gardens are awesome – planting on walls OK – espalier fruit trees save space. Raised vegie gardens with new soil may be the safest (see the **warning** below).

Useful sprays that are food grade products: Eco Oil (canola oil), eco fungicide (baking powder), Yates anti Rot (food acid). Very safe products: Yates Success for insects & fruit fly (natural bacterium), Yates Insect & mite killer Natrasoap (old fashioned soap), Dipel caterpillar killer (natural soil bacterium).

ACQ timber to build veg gardens. Or maybe besser blocks or even Hebel blocks.

Sustainability: run roof water onto your gardens and lawns. Maybe through water tanks...but they are not all that great. Use Scotts Liquid slow release lawn foods – these don't pollute local creeks or ground water. They make your lawn as environmentally friendly as the solar panels on your roof. Reusing is far better than recycling. Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

Warning

Many soils in Australia contain toxic chemicals and suburban soils are amongst the worst – posing serious risks for vegie gardeners. Inner suburbs have been shown to have dangerously high lead pollution – see Vegesafe from Macquarie University or <www.smh.com.au/nsw/lead-levels-in-sydney-soil-dangerously-high-20170120-gtuea6.html>. Lead pollution comes from lead paints, petrol etc. Other heavy metal contamination may come from fertilisers, and old factories once in inner suburbs, may have left toxic residues. Organochlorines such as DDT, Chlordane, Dieldrin etc are also often found in garden soils due to spraying for termites. All of these chemicals last for many, many years in soils, only breaking down very slowly. Vegesafe from Macquarie Uni will test your soil free and advise on safer vegie gardening.