

MEETING REPORT - Gardening in the Third Age (Gadgets and Gizmos)

Anne Luder recently retired as a lecturer Capel Manor College, where she specialised, for over eighteen years, in therapeutic horticulture for severe physical disabilities. During this time she picked up many hints and tips that she shared with us. She has found that there are always “work arounds” for any situation. Studies have shown that gardening enhances your mood, stimulates your senses, promotes curiosity and improves memory. It also promotes mental and physical functions and dexterity. The health benefits of gardening include reduced blood pressure and muscle tension, it encourages activity and can improve sleep, so her advice is to keep going in the garden for as long as we can.

You don't need a large garden to enjoy the benefits, but if you need to downsize, you can garden in a window box or dustbin. In the winter you can garden by preparing Christmas decorations. Other indoor gardening includes planning new projects, seed sowing, potting on. You don't need a large pond to enjoy the sound of running water in your garden, there are lots of small water features now available that are low maintenance but still enhance a garden.

Anne suggested many ways to take the physical stress out of gardening. From lightweight hoses to ergonomic garden tools, and ratchet secateurs. Apparently many of us use spades and garden forks that are not long enough for us, contributing to many a bad back. To help those who find it hard to bend down to the ground, there are many ways to raise the garden including using old furniture such as a chest of drawers or old kitchen table. It may also be time to raise the water butt even higher so the watering can is nearer to us.

Her advice to keep a mobile phone with you at all times certainly rang home with Clive and Briony. You never know when you may need to call for help!