



Alexandra Campbell explains how to make your garden easier to access.

Too Late!

We're now fully into the birds' nesting season, which means you shouldn't prune trees where birds could be nesting. It is, in fact, illegal to do so. So if you have a tree you meant to prune, you'll have to wait until August. The exception is any tree in the prunus (cherry) family, which need pruning in June. Well, that's one thing off the "to do" list for this month – have a cup of tea instead.



Photographs by Alexandra Campbell and iStock

If you're beginning to find gardening difficult because of a health issue, there are ways to make it easier. I've recently chatted to Gardening for the Disabled, a charity based in Kent who offer funding, practical help and advice for those with physical or mental problems.

And even if everyone in your household is currently fully fit, there are some sensible steps you can take to make gardening safer or easier.

Raised beds are the number one way to make gardening easier for most people.

"We get asked for raised beds more than anything else," Rosie Kefford of Gardening for the Disabled says.

Raised beds really help if you have problems with bending, and they make gardening possible for wheelchair users.



They're also very useful for people who have problems with balance, or who can only stand for short periods, as you can sit while you garden.

Even raising a bed by a foot or two can make it easier to garden, but raised beds at table height are probably the best.

And if I can add a safety note – low raised beds can be a trip hazard.

Gardening for the Disabled's clients often get their raised beds from Harrod Horticultural or Woodblock.co.uk.

The next most important thing to consider if you want

to make gardening easier and safer are the levels in your garden. Steps – especially badly made ones – are impossible for wheelchairs, and difficult for people with balance or sight issues.

One common problem with garden steps is that architects or builders make them with the same dimensions as stairs inside. This is too steep for any garden.

Steps indoors measure 17-18 cm up (the riser) while the step itself needs to be 22-24 cm deep. In a garden, the steps should be lower – no more than