



## Top Tips for Monthly Gardening Activities Family Carers and Friends

Consider writing out gardening calendar of activities which maps out the gardening year, for example months for planting bulbs, pruning roses, sowing seeds, or feeding the lawn. Once a month you could dedicate a morning to planning, discussing, or carrying out the due task. This can also help to orientate your relative if they seem uncertain of the season.

### Reminiscence about gardening

- Gardening reminiscence activities can also be given a theme such as:
- Gardening tools and methods – try to get hold of old gardening equipment (this can often be picked up quite cheaply from car boot sales or second hand shops). Discuss the tools and methods your relatives used in the past. You could ask your relative for their top gardening tips and write these up into a factsheet or book to share with other family members or friends. Compare these to modern methods and tools and see how the technology around gardening has progressed. You could look in gardening magazines or catalogues for new products or look at relevant websites

### Flowers of the month

As well as birth stones for each calendar month there are also flowers assigned to each month of the year. A monthly gardening related activity could be to grow, look at and chat about the flower of the month. When it is your birthday or your relative's birthday, chat about the birth flowers. Did they already know about their birth flower? Is the supposed meaning of their flower true for them?

Month	Flower	Meaning
January	Carnation	Whimsical/fanciful
February	Violet	Faithfulness
March	Daffodil	Respect/regard
April	Sweet Pea	Thinking of you
May	Lily of the Valley	Humbleness/humility
June	Rose	Love/romance
July	Larkspur	Passionate attachment
August	Gladiolus	Splendid beauty
September	Aster	Daintiness/elegance
October	Calendula	Grief/jealousy
November	Chrysanthemum	Optimism/cheerfulness
December	Narcissus	Extreme self confidence

### **Talks from a local gardening club or garden centre**

Perhaps you and your relative could join a local group and attend a talk or demonstration. The local clubs may also run shows or competitions which you and your relative could go to or even enter.

### **Annually**

#### **RSPB big garden bird watch**

Each year the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) holds its Big Garden Birdwatch. You and your relative could take part.

It involves watching and recording the number of birds you see in the garden within an hour. There is a counting sheet which can be downloaded from the website and then you can send in your results. The RSPB then collates and issues the results from all the one hour surveys and can see which bird populations are increasing or decreasing.

You could develop this into an activity of spotting and identifying birds. You could use bird identification books, DVDs and listen to birdsongs as well. Your relative could talk about their favourite birds and explain why they like them.

#### **Sunflower growing targets**

You could set a fun growing target, such as growing sunflowers or the biggest marrow. Sunflowers are good to use as they grow quickly and look very impressive. Your relative could plant a seed in a pot and label it with their name then water and look after it and compare its growth with yours. The plants could be measured weekly and plotted on a graph or use sunflower shaped symbols to move up a scale on the wall inside so you can both see your progress!

If you would like to discuss the information included in this resource, please call the NAPA Helpline; our free and confidential activity support service.

