function get_style51 () { return "none"; } function end51_ () { document.getElementById('pinwheel51').style.display = get_style51(); } **Press Release from the Scottish Chiropractic Association**

Gardening Without Groans:
The Scottish Chiropractic Association's Good-back Gardening Guide

At this time of year, Scottish chiropractors experience a seasonal influx of patients with back and neck strain caused by over-zealous gardening. Dr Ross McDonald, SCA President, comments: "The arrival of spring brings out the gardener in all of us, regardless of how fit or physically active we have been during the winter. As a result, we see an increase in gardening-related spinal injury and pain. Looking after your back properly before, during and after gardening activities will help sustain your health and fitness and will also ensure that you can garden successfully throughout the season! Our gardeners' guide to better back care will plant good habits for life".

Preparation

All keen gardeners know that preparation is essential for good results. The same is true for spinal care:

- **Design your garden with your back in mind.** Raised beds, low maintenance planting, the purchase of lifting hand trolleys and light-weight, long-handled tools will all help. If you are lucky enough to have a potting shed or greenhouse, make sure that work benches are the correct height to avoid stooping.

- **Planting for protection.** Go for ground-covering plants to reduce weeding; use bark to stifle weeds; enjoy tubs and container gardening for annuals, to avoid too much bending, digging and planting up in your borders.

- **Use a lifting trolley to move heavy items such pots, sacks of compost.** Failing this, use your wheelbarrow and lift from a squatting position using your legs/knees, not by bending

over. Decanting material into lighter loads is also a sensible back-protection technique.

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Buy heavy items (cement, compost etc) in smaller bags to reduce your carrying load.

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Get regular checks with a Scottish Chiropractic Association practitioner and seek advice from your SCA chiropractor on suitable stretching and warm-up exercises.

Gardening Without Groans

Minimising the “back-breaking” tasks is the best way to avoid back strain.

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Digging. Warm up before digging with gentle stretching or with lighter tasks. Try and relax while you dig and avoid pressurised over-exertion which increases tension and back strain. Take small spadefuls or use a small spade. Take regular breaks and continue to do stretching exercises.

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Weeding and Planting. Use a proper kneeling pad, with side handles to enable you to get up using your legs/knees. Don’t over-reach into your flower beds and use a long-handled, lightweight hoe instead.
If kneeling, take regular breaks, get up carefully and keep stretching.

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Mowing. Ensure that you have a suitable machine for your lawn, ideally with an electric start and motorised wheels. Keep upright and do not swing from side to side at the

waist.

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Pruning. Use secateurs which have “cut and hold” action and use long-handled loppers when appropriate. Again, be careful not to over-reach and try to cut as close to your body as possible. If using a ladder, move it often to avoid over-reaching.

If you experience pain or discomfort as a result of gardening, please see your local SCA chiropractor for advice and help.

For more information, please contact:

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Background:

Chiropractic is a primary health-care profession that specialises in the diagnosis, treatment and overall management of conditions that are due to problems with the joints, ligaments, tendons and nerves of the body, particularly those of the spine. Chiropractors focus on the relationship

between the structure and function of the human body, primarily coordinated by the nervous system. Treatment consists of a wide range of techniques designed to improve the function of the nervous system, relieving pain and muscle spasm and improving overall health.

Scottish Chiropractic Association www.sca-chiropractic.org

The SCA celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

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without worrying.

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