

## 5 TIPS FOR PREVENTING BACK PAIN AND INJURY WHILE WORKING IN THE YARD THIS SUMMER:

Back injuries frequently occur when we try to lift heavy lawn equipment, bags of fertilizer, or heavy pots without being in the proper position, or when we stoop, bend, or kneel in the same position too long.

1. Lift Safely by spreading your feet apart to give a wide base of support and stand as close as possible to the object. Bend at the knees and lift using your leg muscles and keep your trunk in as straight as possible. When lifted, hold the object close to your body to reduce the load on the back. If you can move the object without lifting, push it (don't pull it).
2. Minimize and avoid twisting – when you're transporting heavy objects, before you pick it up point your body and toes in the direction you're walking.
3. If you're working for a long period of time, change positions every 10 to 15 minutes. Take brief breaks, stand up and walk around for a couple of minutes, which can help keep your back muscles loose.
4. Drink plenty of water – this prevents us from being stiff. Water enhances the height of our intervertebral disks which act as shock absorbers for our spine.
5. If you're straining, ask for help!