

WVATS

West Virginia Assistive Technology System Newsletter

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Getting Back Behind the Wheel



Public transportation is limited in WV. This leaves many people, especially those with mobility needs, with few options to make it to work or run errands. Driver rehabilitation programs help people get back behind the wheel.

In West Virginia, the Driver Rehabilitation Program is run by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). The offices are located in Oak Hill, Nitro and Morgantown. The program includes evaluations and training to DRS clients. Services are also available for people who are NOT clients of DRS.

If a health care provider approves the evaluation, the individual goes through tests to see if driving is an option for them at this time. The person's vision is tested, along with other physical and psychological tests. The individual must also have a letter from his or her health care provider.

If driving is an option, the Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) will see what adaptive modifications or training the person may need. There are many modifications for vehicles including ramps, hand controls or driving from a wheelchair. The CDRS also provides training on the equipment in a vehicle that is controlled by two people.

To apply for the program or for more information, call Cynthia Lokey or Sandra Moore at the Nitro office at **304-760-7166**.

Areas Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) look at:

- Can the individual independently make decisions?
- Is the person able to make judgment-based decisions?
- What is the person's decision making speed?
- How well does the person do when there is more than one area needing their attention?
- Can the person anticipate possible situations?
- Does the person understand the order of events?
- Can the person see if a situation has possible risks?



New for Loan

Leg Lifter

The Leg Lifter is a useful tool for those who cannot move their legs without assistance. The strap allows users to move their legs without bending or straining. The Leg Lifter is lightweight and can be easy to move or take with you.



Cup Holder

This cup holder fastens to most walkers or wheelchairs to hold cups or mugs from 10-32 ounces. The cup holder has an insert that can be taken out to hold drinks of different sizes. By attaching the holder in a variety of directions it is useable with most walkers and wheelchairs.



Wall Switch Extension Handle

The Wall Switch Extension Handle helps put wall switches within easier reach. Children, wheelchair users or people with limited reach can more easily turn the switch on and off. The handle provides a 12-inch extension to any standard light switch and it is made of clear plastic.



New for Exchange

Switch Click USB



The Switch Click is a large button switch that can be plugged into the USB port on a computer and used as a left mouse click. The Switch Click also has an external jack that allows other switches to be used through it.



Switch Adapted Cassette Player

The cassette player is adapted using a battery interrupter to make it switch accessible. The player comes with over a dozen cassette tapes of children's books and music.

To borrow one of these devices from the WVATS Loan Library or find out what is available for exchange, call **800-841-8436**.

E-Z-On 101 Zipper Vest

This harness style vest can help passengers who need extra restraint while riding in a vehicle. The vest also helps keep the passenger from unbuckling the seatbelt. The vest zips in the back, out of reach of the passenger.

For more information, visit www.ezonpro.com or call 800-323-6598.



Key Turner

The Key Turner can make it easier to turn a key by giving extra area to grip. The device can be used anywhere that you would use a key including vehicles, offices and homes. The Key Turner can hold up to three keys.

For more information, visit www.sportaid.com or call 800-743-7203.

Car Caddie

The Car Caddie is a handle that can be put on the door of any vehicle to help a person get in and out. The handle fastens to the top of the doorframe and can be taken off and put on another door. The Car Caddie can be adjusted to meet the need of different people and their vehicle.

For more information, visit www.activeforever.com or call 800-377-8033.

LightOn Black Mobile Phone Signaler



The LightOn signaler is a cell phone docking station that lights up when the user gets a text message or phone call. A bed shaker can also be attached to the device.

For more information, visit www.harriscomm.com or call 800-825-6758.



PowerLink 4

The PowerLink 4 is an environmental control unit that helps switch users control up to two AC-powered appliances.



The unit can be used with single switches or wirelessly with the Big Beamer or Jelly Beamer transmitters. The device has six modes of control:

- Direct: Behaves like a traditional switch
- Count: Behaves like Direct mode, shows number of activations
- Two-Switch: Behaves like Direct mode, both switches must be activated
- Timed Seconds: Runs appliance from one to 99 seconds
- Timed Minutes: Runs appliance from one to 99 minutes
- Latch: First activation turns appliance ON; second activation turns it OFF

For more information, visit www.ablenetinc.com or call 800-322-0956.

Portable Sawhorse Clamping System

The portable sawhorse clamping system has a tripod base. Instead of tightening a clamp with your hands, you can use a foot pedal to apply clamping force.



For more information about portable sawhorse clamps, visit

www.rockwelltools.com or call 866-514-7625.



Easy Reach Seat Belt Handle

The Easy Reach Seat Belt Handle can make it easier for a person to grab the seat belt to put it on. The device adds 5½ inches of extra reach and glows in the dark, making it easier to find at night.

For more information, visit www.dynamic-living.com or call 888-940-0605.



Gas Cap Tool

The Gas Cap Tool can be helpful to people with arthritis or other hand injuries. The tool comes with two caps to fit most cars. The handle helps the user open and close the gas cap.

For more information, visit www.pattersonmedical.com or call 800-323-5547.



Temple Grandin

Animal Scientist Temple Grandin has designed livestock handling facilities in the United States and around the world. Dr. Grandin teaches classes about design and livestock behavior at Colorado State University. She writes about the welfare and behavior of animals.

Temple Grandin is also a person with autism. In 1986, she published the book, *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*. It was the first book about autism from an insider's viewpoint of being someone with autism.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1947, Temple hummed and made noises as a toddler but she did not talk. She did not want to be hugged because the human contact overwhelmed her. Doctors diagnosed her with severe autism and recommended institutionalization. Instead, her mother advocated for her and enrolled Temple in speech therapy. She began talking when she was three.

As a teenager, Grandin spent time on her aunt's ranch in Arizona. She noticed cows that were being vaccinated sometimes relaxed while being "hugged" in a device called a squeeze shoot. One day, after a panic attack, Temple tried the device herself. She found the deep pressure calming. The event inspired her to use her ability to think in pictures and design her own squeeze chute.

She began a lifelong journey of exploring the human-animal bond. She says, "My connection with these animals goes back to the time I first realized that the squeeze machine could help calm my anxiety. I have been seeing the world from their point of view ever since." She writes about that connection in books like *Animals Make Us Human*.

In 2010, HBO made a movie about her life. Visit Dr. Grandin's websites at www.templegrandin.com and www.grandin.com.

Grandin, Temple. 2006. Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism. 2nd Edition. Vintage Press. Pg. 167.

Were you born with a 'Green Thumb'?

There are people who seem to be born with a talent for growing plants. Their vegetables are vibrant. Their flowers flourish. They have a green thumb.

Where does the phrase "green thumb" come from anyway?

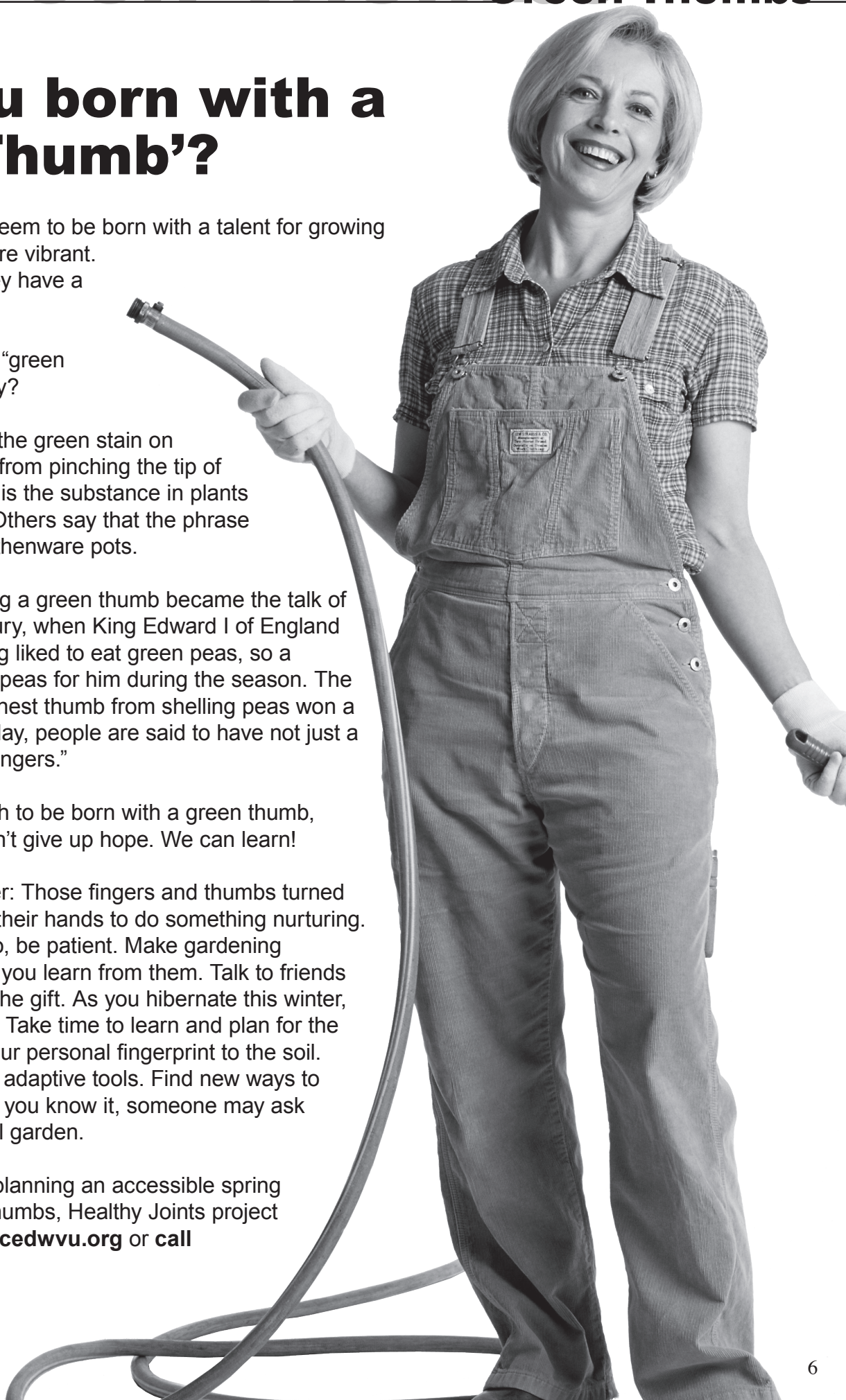
Some say this refers to the green stain on one's thumbs and fingers from pinching the tip of a plant stem. (Chlorophyll is the substance in plants that makes them green). Others say that the phrase refers to the algae on earthenware pots.

One theory is that having a green thumb became the talk of the town in the 13th Century, when King Edward I of England sat on the throne. The king liked to eat green peas, so a group of servants shelled peas for him during the season. The servant who had the greenest thumb from shelling peas won a royal prize. In England today, people are said to have not just a green thumb, but "green fingers."

If you were lucky enough to be born with a green thumb, congratulations! If not, don't give up hope. We can learn!

One lesson to remember: Those fingers and thumbs turned green when people used their hands to do something nurturing. They learned by doing. So, be patient. Make gardening mistakes and laugh when you learn from them. Talk to friends and neighbors who have the gift. As you hibernate this winter, dream of a spring garden. Take time to learn and plan for the upcoming season. Add your personal fingerprint to the soil. If not fingers, then toes or adaptive tools. Find new ways to cultivate the earth. Before you know it, someone may ask how you got your beautiful garden.

To find out more about planning an accessible spring garden, visit the Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints project website at greenthumbs.cedwvu.org or call **800-841-8436**.



Contact WVATS

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WVATS Demonstration Center

WVATS has a new look at the Center for Excellence in Disabilities in Morgantown, WV. WVATS is working with the state Traumatic Brain Injury Project and local vendors to make a demonstration center. The demonstration center will show assistive technology devices in use in everyday settings. The areas include a family room, kitchen, office space and bathroom.

A demonstration center lets people see and use assistive technology devices. This can help people see how these devices can be used in their own homes and work places. It can help with ideas on how to arrange their home and set up devices to make them useful. Demonstrated devices include environmental control units, iPad mounting systems, lift chairs and adaptations for bathrooms.

For more information or to arrange a tour of the demonstration center, call WVATS at **800-841-8436**.



Senator Prezioso visits the WVATS Demonstration Center