

## **AGING GRACEFULLY IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY**

By: Ruth S Cranney

Aging is a life long adventure and is filled with many surprises. In each phase of this journey we gain knowledge in preparing for the next step.

Early years are like the springtime. We plant seeds and watch them grow. I remember my pre-school years when Mom made learning fun. I helped her measure the flour and sugar when she cooked. She asked me to count how many people would be eating dinner and set the table. Once there was one place setting short and she asked me if I forgot to count myself. After dinner we would linger around the table and discuss the events of the day. Everyone sharing in the happy news and then helping to solve problems that needed mending. Remembering this spirit of cooperation and sharing has helped me in my relationship with others.

Moving along in this changing cycle, it is summertime when life is brighter and I was so eager to get involved in new experiences. The 4-H clubs held a special interest for me as I sewed articles to enter in the county fair; I remember how excited I was when the judge clipped a blue ribbon to my apron. Adjustments were made as I grew older and more was expected of me. I liked to visit the older lady living next door. She was from Sweden and she told me many stories about living in the old country.

The autumn years were spent collecting my knowledge and putting it to use as I raised my family. These were the happiest times of my life. Watching them grow to adulthood, I attended their music recitals and school plays. I choked back tears of joy and made sounds that annoyed my husband until he would nudge me in the ribs with his elbow. I learned to breathe through my mouth to muffle the tiny sobs.

The children grew up all too soon. When the grandchildren came along, I spent many hours with them.

Now some may say that I am in the winter of my life. It is true, I am no longer vigorous, my hair is turning gray, and I walk slower and more cautiously. I have to make a few modifications. There are still many things left to do like gardening, sewing for the family, visiting friends, helping where needed and tending my great grandson who asked me "Grandma, tell me some stories, you know, things that happened in the days when you lived." Well, I'm still living and very happy to share joys and treasures with others.

I'll continue in this twenty-first century gracefully and gratefully enjoying the adventures all along the way.