

## TROLLEY DASH

# My 20-year backache ...after spraying the flowers!



By Maggie  
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**I was only doing a bit of gardening... I wailed to my husband Viv.**

He'd rushed

home from his job as a science teacher to find me flat out on the settee, with our son Michael, then 11, looking after me.

I'd been balancing on top of the five-foot wall that surrounded a raised flowerbed in the garden. Had lost my balance, and crashed down onto the lawn below, still clutching the bottle of greenfly spray.

'If you think you've come off bad, you should see the state of the rose bushes you hit on the way down,' Viv teased.

'Oh, I expect I'll be fine,' I said, thinking I just needed a bit of rest. I didn't bother my doctor, never mind A&E.

It was 12 whole months later that I woke up one morning and couldn't get out of bed.

Now I did need to see my GP!

I explained to her about the

accident, and she could tell I'd done terrible damage to my spine.

I was rushed to Dunedin Hospital and put into traction, before an exploratory op revealed splinters of spine that had to be removed. Another op was needed to deal with the discs I'd ruptured, and one more to ease the by-now constant pain caused by the damage done to my sciatic nerve.

Afterwards there was still pain – if I stood too long, sat awkwardly or had to reach for anything.

That went on for 20 years, wore me down.

I was bored giving excuses to friends and family as the pain in my back stopped me leading an ordinary life.

Then last December I started wearing an Acticare machine at home during the day. It passes little electrical pulses through the skin to help the body produce natural pain-killing chemicals.

And now, at last, I'm back in the garden, tending my flowers.

I'll be steering clear of any raised beds, but at least I have some quality of life back again.



*I'd damaged my sciatic nerve*

