

# Garden Smart...Garden Easy...

## Tools Make the Difference

Garden tools are important to the enjoyment of gardening and to the continued health and mobility of your body. Attention to the tools you use can greatly enhance your gardening pleasure.

Many manufacturers have re-designed garden tools to ease the strain and discomfort of routine activities, such as kneeling, cutting, lifting, pulling and pushing. Try out the tools before you buy, if you can. Especially check weight and ease of use. Local garden centers are a good source of new tools on the market. If you order from a catalog or online and find the tool is not what you want, don't hesitate to return it.

Evaluate the tools you already use—often they can be easily adapted to fit your needs.

### Look for:

- Lightweight pruners with gear mechanisms or rotating handles that relieve stress on hands and arms and increase cutting power.
- Loppers that use gears to make cutting large stems easier.
- Lightweight and sharper hedge shears.
- Telescoping pruners and loppers to reach higher.
- Telescoping rakes to reach farther.
- Trowels with curved ergonomic and cushioned handles for easier digging.
- Weeding tools to help lift out weeds rather than pull them out and put pressure on hands and wrists.
- Kneeling pads. Some have gel inside. One kneeling pad design has a frame to help you stand up, and then becomes a sturdy bench when it's turned upside down. Another pad design unrolls a couple of feet so you can move along without needing to stand up so often.
- Wheelbarrows that are lighter weight and have one or two wheels.
- Lightweight garden carts with wide handles that you can push or pull. Some tip over so you can push or scoop in whatever you want from ground level.
- Gloves in various weights and lengths to protect your hands from sun and to help cushion tools.
- Long-handled watering wands for hanging baskets.
- Drip irrigation on a timer to provide regular watering.



### Adapt for your garden what's already out there:

- Tape foam tubing around shovel handles to make them softer and provide a wider grip.
- A carpenter's apron or fishing vest can become a tool carrier.
- A mailbox placed in the garden can hold tools to avoid multiple trips to the shed.
- Vinyl fence posts or other kinds of poles can be positioned around your garden to grab onto to steady yourself. Paint them bright colors to see easily and to jazz up your garden.
- Have PVC piping cut to your waist height and drop seeds through it into the ground without bending over. A funnel taped to the top end of the pipe and an angle cut at the bottom ensures accuracy!
- Use Velcro® to fasten plants to stakes.
- Add extensions to your present garden tools to reach higher.
- An additional upright handle can be fastened to a tool handle for a better grip.

<http://rec.udel.edu/Extension/MasterGardeners/index.html> or call us at (302) 856-2585, ext. 544.



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