

Garden Garb

From clothing to cubbies, make sure you're ready to dig in the dirt this spring with the freshest gardening gadgets.

By Sarah E. Coleman
Photos by Karen K. Acevedo

Buzz Off Sun HatWe all know that any form of outdoor work can be tough on normal clothes—especially when you're bending, kneeling, pulling and hauling dirt, compost, plants and all manner of tools (and if you carry these tools in your pockets, as most of us are inclined to do, fabric needs to be virtually indestructible!).

Check out some of our favorite apparel and garden goodies to see if they can aid you in your quest for gardening success.

Bug Off
It can be quite irritating to have to stop what you're doing every two seconds to slap at mosquitoes, no-see-ums, flies and other annoying insects.

Buzz Off Ultra Lite VestSometimes keeping away the bugs takes more energy than planting the entire garden! Thankfully, ExOfficio has a solution. With clothing featuring their odorless Buzz Off Insect Shield, wearers are protected from a variety of insects, including mosquitoes, chiggers, ticks, ants, flies, midges and no-see-ums.

The Buzz Off shield combines permethrin, a manmade form of the natural insect repellent found in chrysanthemums, with a new, patent-pending process. Registered with the EPA, Buzz Off garments are a greener way to keep away insects that could carry Lyme disease, West Nile virus and similar maladies. The Buzz Off Ultra Lite Vest has a total of 11 pockets—enough for all the seeds, pruners, spades, twine, water bottles and plant markers you can carry!

It also offers 30+ UPF (similar to SPF ratings on sunscreen) for excellent UV protection in addition to its ability to repel insects. The mesh midsection and back will keep you cool even on the hottest of days; it's also wrinkle resistant—no matter what you do to this vest, it'll still look good!

Spring mornings can still be a bit cool, but they heat up rapidly once the sun rises. The Buzz Off Baja Long-sleeve Shirt is the perfect piece to take you from morning 'til night.

Baja ShirtWith roll-up sleeve tabs, an Airomesh-lined yoke and climate-controlled ventilation panels along the arms and back, this shirt will keep you cool under the most intense heat. An action pleat in the back allows for easy movement; this shirt will bend and stretch with you all day long.

Available in a range of colors from light flamingo to poppy, this shirt is presentable enough to go from garden bed to grocery store with no problem. An alternative to your floppy straw hat, the Buzz Off Sun Hat is made of 100 percent nylon with 30+ UPF sun protection—a must when you're gallivanting about your garden. The removable cord has an adjustable cinch, perfect for those breezy spring days.

Not just a fashion statement anymore, bandannas can now serve double duty as bug repellents. Tie this bandanna around your neck to keep biting bugs at bay.

Available in bamboo green, poppy, water and light olive, the Buzz Off Insect Shield is good for 25 washings. ExOfficio, 800-644-7303

Buzz Off BandannaThe new Carhartt for Women Double Front Sandstone Duck Dungarees are virtually indestructible—which is a great quality to have when you're working around the farm!

Made of durable, 12-ounce cotton, the contoured waistband sits just below your waist—making them comfortable to wear when bending and straightening all day long. The roomy, straight leg fits nicely over work boots and there are plenty of pockets for toting around all your gear.

Get a Grip

There's no item more indispensable than a good pair of work gloves when there are rose bushes to prune, barberry to be transplanted or briars to be cleared. SafeGrasp GardenArmor and WorkArmor gardening gloves are some of the toughest workhorses around. The Advantage Garden Gloves (#230) have three layers of SuperFabric in the palm, allowing you to handle just about any heavy-duty gardening chore with ease.

Muck Boot Scrub Boot The SuperFabric is made of super-hard, micro-sized resin guard plates that are actually integrated into the fabric itself to make an extremely durable-yet-flexible composite fabric. The thumb and index fingers, both high exposure areas, have extra protection, but the spandex material over the back of the hand is breathable and stretchable for all-day chores.

These gloves offer 3 times the puncture protection of leather and 14 times the cut protection of leather, yet are washable and stain-resistant.

The Puncture and Cut Resistant Work Gloves (#425) protect hands from injury from wire mesh, sheet metal, needles, lumber and more—all of which we tend to work with on a farm. These gloves provide extreme cut protection, allowing you to work more quickly with the confidence that you won't be harmed. SuperFabric covers the palm, thumb and fingers.

Loadumper Multi-cart Need even more confidence when stringing barbed wire or working with especially dense briars? Check out the Heavy Duty Puncture and Cut Resistant Barbed Wire Gloves (#447). Now you can tear down old fencing or pick up broken glass without fear! These gloves have 25 times more cut resistance than leather and are comfortable to boot!

If The Shoe Fits ...

Quality, waterproof shoes that are easy to get on and off are a must on any farm, especially in the garden, where watering is almost a daily chore and soil can be wet and muddy. Comfort is at a premium when there are dozens of seedlings to be planted and loads of compost to be hauled. Blisters are not an option! Crocs unisex, all-terrain footwear is the perfect choice for cold, damp weather. The enclosed footbed will keep your toes warm and dry while the water-resistant leather upper with laces provides a snug fit. These shoes are light as a feather! Crocs, 866-306-3179

Dansko shoes have always been associated with comfort and durability. The Calla is stylish enough that you can dig in the dirt or muck out the barn all day and then go into town at night—all in the same pair of shoes! Shown in black oiled leather, these shoes provide the comfort you crave as well as the support you need to be on your feet all day. Dansko, 800-DANSKO4

Mother Nature has met her match in these pull-on Bogs—a must-have for muddy conditions that would suck off almost any other shoe.

Breathable neoprene and waterproof rubber keep your toes toasty in winter, cool in spring and dry all year-round. The non-slip, rubber outsole provides great traction on muddy, snowy or icy surfaces—and when it comes to spring, who knows what weather you'll wake up to!

The floral print updates this tough, sturdy boot, which has a removable insole. The entire boot is anti-microbial lined to provide protection from odor, stains, and deterioration due to bacteria, fungus and other microorganisms.

We got ours from Gardener's Supply Company, but they can also be ordered directly from Bogs Footwear. Bogs, 800-201-2070

Muck Boots are a perennial favorite of outdoorsmen near and far. Available in a range of styles, their newest offerings include the Scrub Boot, perfect for all those dirty jobs; it's resistant to fertilizers, household cleaners and grass stains. If they get too dirty, simply scrub and rinse with soap and water; if they get wet inside, remove the cushion insole and air dry. The snug topline keeps cold out, but on warm days, simply turn down the collar to vent the interior.

Muck's Daily Lawn and Garden Shoe is also resistant to most anything; the snug fit along the ankle keeps out dirt and pebbles—a bonus when you're trekking through freshly tilled garden beds! Your toes get added protection with the

wrap-up toe bumper and the four-way stretch nylon is resistant to snags.

Both Muck styles feature breathable airmesh, giving you slipper-softness in a tough, rugged shoe. Muck Boot Company, 877-GET- MUCK

Garden Goodies

Some things just make our gardening lives easier, whether they hold lots of supplies, carry lots of dirt, take the weight off our backs or remember what we planted last year. Here are some fun gadgets to consider:

The Waistie Garden Pouch is a gardener's dream come true: It's ideal for weeding, pruning, deadheading, collecting berries and more! Now you don't have to drag that old trash can behind you; simply fill the large pocket and unzip to remove the contents. With a unique, hands-free design, you can get more done in less time. There are also side pockets for gardening tools or water bottles. Available through Yardiac, 866-YARDIAC; and Clean Air Gardening, 214-819-9500.

Keep tools, pots, seeds, gardening clogs and more close at hand and organized with these chicken-coop cubbies from Smith & Hawken. Made of weather-resistant cedar, they're perfect next to the potting shed or in the mudroom. With individual cubbies that have upturned lips, everything stays securely stowed. Smith & Hawken, 800-940-1170.

Lugging bags of mulch, compost or transplants is infinitely easier with help from the Loadumper Multi-Cart. The cart's U-shaped handles allow for one-handed operation—much easier than trying to manipulate a wheelbarrow through freshly turned beds or on undulating terrain. There is no need to lift the load to haul—simply push down on the handle and the load moves effortlessly. The 6-cubic foot model can handle up to 400 pounds and is just as easily dumped—the patented gravity latch makes it so you don't have to lift the entire cart to empty it, like traditional wheelbarrows; it can even be pulled by your mower or utility vehicle. This all-terrain cart also features Memory Foam Flat-Free Wheels that enable a smooth ride so you never have to worry about losing a load; Loadumper, 410-461-2100.

Lifestyle maven Katie Brown has an entire line of beautiful garden items, but we loved her fashionable brown apron, made of heavy-duty cotton canvas. It's perfect for digging in the dirt or creating craft projects. With multiple pockets to hold all your stuff, the stylish halter design is comfortable and machine washable. Katie Brown, 866-682-2060.

We know how important it is to keep detailed garden records, so we're always looking for more than your average garden planner. This version from Gardener's Supply Company is a combination of garden journal, record keeper, scrapbook and organizer. There's space for three years of notes, annual checklists, plant wish lists, graph paper, a project-planning section and pockets to store receipts, photos, magazine clippings or whatever your heart desires. Designed in a standard binder, you can easily add more pockets or pages. This book will be a constant garden companion! Gardener's Supply Company, 888-833-1412.

About the Author

Sarah Coleman, former Hobby Farm Home managing editor, dons equine gear when she rides her horse. Here she tried out some of the best gardening garb available for spring gardening season.