



Great Gardening Tools

Here are 6 gardening tools picked by gardener Amy Grisak. No matter your gardening style, these “must-haves” can make your gardening chores easier.

By Amy Grisak

Amy Grisak, above, can't do without her garden fork. And she calls the CobraHead tool, show below, one of her all-time favorites.

Photos by Amy Grisak Having the right tool for the job can mean the difference between delight and drudgery when it comes to gardening chores.

Thankfully, whether you prefer to stand and weed, or wallow right down in the dirt wrestling dandelions out of the ground, you can discover the ideal match to your gardening style.

Finding the perfect tool can take years of trial and error; or better yet, talk to fellow gardeners about their favorites. Most are more than happy to host an impromptu “show and tell” touting the positive attributes of their most functional implements.

Here are a few that are bound to make life much easier: Hand Trowel: The hand trowel is one of the most used tools in the garden, particularly during planting season when it becomes an extension of your arm during planting season. A hand trowel makes quick work of digging the holes, then replacing the dirt around the seedlings. It's also handy when you need to carefully lift summer bulbs, such as gladiolus and calla lilies at the end of the season, and plant spring bulbs in the fall.

CobraHead Tools: Ever wish you could take your fingernail and pluck out a tenacious weed? With the CobraHead you can, as well as cultivate, make furrows for planting, dig holes and much more. The curved steel neck is tipped with a wicked blade that stays remarkably sharp even with abusive treatment. And the best part is the blade doesn't pull out of the molded handle no matter how hard you're digging. CobraHead makes a small hand version for working on the ground, or a long-handled tool to be able to stand and work.

Garden Fork: Whether you're turning compost or digging potatoes, a sturdy spading fork will do the trick. A garden fork is shorter than a pitchfork with a 'D' handle at the end making it efficient in digging through heavy soil with its sturdy, flat tines.

By-pass Pruners: By-pass pruners make a clean cut with one sharpened blade on the top passing over an unsharpened one on the bottom in a scissors-like fashion--unlike an anvil pruner that tends to crush stems. Look for a curved, ergonomic handle design to minimize wrist fatigue. Sharp by-pass pruners can just as easily snip fresh herbs for the evening meal, cut roses or other flowers, as trim tough branches on fruit trees and shrubs.

3-Pronged Cultivator: This metal claw makes quick work of shallow weeds, and is very effective in incorporating compost in the soil or preparing the soil for seedbeds. It's available as a hand tool and a long-handled model depending on your gardening style. Look for one with a sturdy handle that won't loosen with frequent use.

Pointed Hoe: Square hoes do the trick hacking weeds out of wide rows, but for finesse work, the pointed hoe is a far more versatile tool. The pointed hoe is heart shaped, and you can use the point to dispatch weeds in between plants, as well as digging furrows, and covering seeds with the broad edge. It will also break through hard soil, and is an efficient cultivator.

Top

Amy Grisak is a freelance writer in Kalispell, Mont. She's played in the garden for over 25 years.