

Gardening Basics

Gardening Gifts



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Gardening can be a wonderful activity for people of all ages. In addition to enjoying the fruits of your labor, gardening offers many opportunities to exercise different muscle groups, get some daily vitamin D from the sunshine, and make new friends who share common interests. Quality tools and supplies are always a thoughtful gift.

For beginning or experienced gardeners, a raised bed garden is often easier to create and initially may be more productive because our native soils require substantial amendments or organic material. This leads to the first gift recommendation. Local nurseries, big box stores and online vendors offer raised bed gardening supplies. Some are as simple as corner pieces and wood slats ready to assemble, and some are boxes or containers that resemble horse troughs that either sit on the ground or are mounted on legs.

Other ideas:

- Tools for working in the garden are easily available and essential for a gardener. These often come in sets with the basic tools needed. Look for tools that are sturdily built with comfortable grips -- invest in quality to avoid early failure. "Stocking the Toolshed: Hand Tools" from the University of Georgia Extension Service: <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1027-8&title=Stocking%20the%20Toolshed%3A%20Hand%20Tools&fbclid=IwAR3ocMJmiYj-stBcgxVjrEDbxzWPHzpP08TsSTa5hDRclPCe946UOxrsGU0>
- If the toolset does not come with a carrier, you can buy one separately. These are usually made from either heavy canvas with slots for each tool or maybe a sturdy bucket with a canvas insert that has pockets for tools.
- A gardening apron with a couple of pockets that keep your phone and a hand tool at your fingertips.
- A useful tool that may not be in a set is a Hori Hori knife. This tool may be used for digging, cutting, harvesting, weeding, and planting. It usually comes with a protective sheath because the sides are quite sharp and can cut.
- A cushioned pad makes kneeling down for weeding and planting less hard on anyone's knees. One type has handles on either side to assist with lowering to a kneeling position and rising.
- A portable garden cart or a wheelbarrow for moving larger tools, plants, and soil amendments. A wheelbarrow with dual wheels on the front is easier to balance. And a lightweight one that folds up is convenient to store.
- Gardening gloves come in many styles and materials and in a variety of prices.
- A watering wand allows the gardener to water individual plants down at the soil level and to keep water off the leaves, which can lead to fungal infections as well as to appropriately regulate the flow according to the task.
- As many of us get older, we find that the physical effort of gardening is more difficult especially on our hands. If so, there are adaptive garden tools available. Called ergonomic tools, they are designed to ease the strain on our bodies. This web page provides tips and tricks for adaptive gardening techniques: <https://dcmga.com/files/2021/08/Adaptive-Gardening-Techniques.pdf>
- Gardening in North Texas has some unique challenges! So, how about a book dedicated to gardening in Texas? Greg Grant, a Smith County horticulturist for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Tyler, Texas offers a book just for us, "Texas Fruit & Vegetable Gardening", Quarto Publishing or "Easy Gardening for Texas" by

Joseph G. Masabni available from Texas A&M press: <https://www.tamupress.com/.../easy-gardening-for-texas/> or "Easy Gardens for North Central Texas" by Steve Huddleston and Pamela Crawford, Color Garden Publishing.

- A gardening journal is a thoughtful gift for someone who enjoys keeping close track of his or her successes, failures, calendar of tasks, and lessons learned.
- A gift card is always welcome, tucked inside a 'garden theme' greeting card!

Write our home page URL in the gift's card for the additional gift of much more information on North Texas gardening: <http://dcmga.com>