



## Landscape Design

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### **Tooling Around the Garden**

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Tools can make most any endeavor easier, and gardening is no exception. I've come up with a short list of the gardening tools that help me the most. Whether you're just starting out with your gardening, or looking to prune an overflowing garage, here are my recommendations.

First on my list are spades (aka shovels) and trowels. I have two types of spades that serve me well. First is a garden spade with a broad blade and a curved sharp lower edge. This is my all-purpose digger. My second spade is a transplant spade, which looks like a narrow version of the first. This one is very useful for digging into tight spaces. As with the spades, I have a wider trowel for bigger jobs and a narrow trowel for tight work.

Next on the list are my two rakes and a push broom: a heavy-duty hard-tine rake to break up dirt clods and level the soil, a springy-tine rake to clean up leaves and debris (no blower here!) and a push broom to tidy all the edges.

Pruners and saws are next. I use three types of pruners, but you could get away with two, a pair of bypass hand pruners for most jobs and a pair of two-handed loppers for the bigger branches. I also have a mid-range size that is easier to wield than the loppers. If my loppers can't handle the cut, I have a folding crosscut branch saw that makes short work of it.

That's my list for what we think of as "traditional" tools, but there are a few more I would add. On the "do as I say, not as I do" front is eye protection. If you aren't wearing sunglasses, put on safety glasses: my Phormium is now called the "pointy-eye plant," enough said. I also recommend full-spectrum sun block, even on cloudy days. I have a pair of cloth gloves with rubber palms, and lastly I have a wheelbarrow and a number of plastic buckets of different sizes that always come in handy.

Now that you have your basic tools, how do you store them? Clean and dry is the key. Keeping your tools out of the weather will extend their useful lives. I was blessed with a wall of pegboard in the garage, left by the previous owner. Pegboard hangers are available in most hardware stores for darn near any type of tool, and it's been a good solution for me. If you don't have the wall space, however, you can store unwieldy long-handled tools like your shovels, rakes and broom wood ends down in a heavy garbage can. Smaller tools can be stored in your buckets. And if you don't have garage space, I recommend looking into a small Rubbermaid-like tool shed to place in an out-of-the-way section of your yard.