

## Give Dad a Garden Tool for Father's Day

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Fathers Day is this Sunday and you still haven't decided on a gift for Dad. What should you do? If he likes to putter in the garden you need ponder no longer, a new garden tool will always be welcome. There are plenty to choose from ranging from a new power tiller all the way down to a good pair of gloves. So pick out your price range and head out to your favorite garden outlet or nursery.

While expensive power tools may require more decision time than you have available there are a lot of good choices in hand tools and garden equipment that would make great last minute gifts. Let's look at a few suggestions.

Almost any gardener needs some sort of cart or wagon to haul around plants, tools and garden debris. There are a number of choices available locally. Consider the size and layout of Dad's gardening area and his physical ability before you decide. Make sure your choice is sturdy enough to handle his needs.

Hand tools are always welcome. Most gardeners would appreciate a set of pruning shears, a good sturdy trowel or shovel or a new pair of gardening gloves. My personal choice would be a pair of quality pruning shears. These will cost in the forty dollar range and really make a fine gift. I recommend the bypass or scissors type over the blade and anvil pruners. They allow for closer pruning cuts and do not tend to crush the stems.

If you should choose a trowel or shovel make sure they are good and sturdy. Breaking a tool in the middle of a job is both unpleasant and frustrating. Gloves tend to be somewhat of a personal choice but a nice pair of leatherwork gloves will always be appreciated.

For those Dads who are gadget minded or somewhat physically challenged, there are any number of items available. Three that I have personally tried are a Kneeler/Seat, The Claw, and the Weed Hound. These are a help to those who have trouble bending down or kneeling. My wife gave me a Kneeler/Seat as a gift last Fathers Day. It has a sturdy tubular steel frame and a double sided padded seat. Upright it serves as a seat low enough to allow working in the garden without stooping. Turn it over and it becomes a kneeler, the frame acting as supports to help you push back up to a standing position. It folds up for easy storage. I have been recovering from recent knee surgery and have found it to be a big help. The Claw is a device for loosening soil without a lot of bending. It works well in soil that is not too compacted. The Weed Hound, recommended by a local nurseryman, allows you to pull weeds from a standing position. It works particularly well on those pesky broadleaf weeds with the carrot shaped roots. All three of these tools are available locally.

For more information about gardening in our area, visit the University of Florida IFAS Leon County Extension website at <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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