

## A gift for gardening Moms



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**T**hree days until Mother's Day and you still can't decide on a gift for the special mother in your family? If she happens to be a gardener, your job just got easier.

Local nurseries and garden supply stores overflow with items bound to please a gardener whether she tends a few flowers on her patio or is chief landscaper of her own backyard oasis.

Start with basics for the new gardener. Select a how-to gardening or landscaping book that gives practical instruction on designing flower beds, selecting plants appropriate for conditions in her yard, and planting and maintaining those plants.

She may need a trowel, spade, rake, pruners and a good pair of work gloves. For older gardeners, a garden kneeler that becomes a bench when turned upside down is a great convenience. Some come equipped with a tool pouch that hooks to one end. Another is called a tractor scoot, a rounded metal seat attached to four rubber tires, that allows you to move along a flower bed without getting up.

The less energetic mother will appreciate receiving all the materials needed to plant a container garden. Beautiful urns and large flower pots that look like stone or metal but are actually light-weight polypropylene are available in many varieties and colors. Select one large enough for a grouping of six to eight plants or smaller ones for fewer plants.

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Now you will need a bag of good potting soil with nutrients already added. Then for the fun part—select two or three flowering annuals of compatible colors, a taller growing foliage plant to place at the back of the container, and two or three other plants, either flowering or variegated or solid green foliage to trail over the sides of the pot. Select plants for shade or sun depending on where the container garden will be placed. If in doubt, ask garden center personnel to help you make your selections.

While looking at containers, you will also see beautiful glass pots in many shapes and colors. These are ideal for a small water garden. Placed near other supplies for water gardens are small pumps and tubing to circulate the water, and at some local nurseries, pond lilies and other water plants. One or two plants are all small containers can support. Consult garden personnel when making your selection.

A smaller gift might be a basket of fresh herbs. Choose an attractive basket and tuck in cell packs or small pots of herbs, such as thyme, parsley, oregano, mint and others used in cooking. Tie a colorful bow on the handle. Your gift is ready.

Bigger and better possibilities are as easy to obtain. Sure to delight any gardener would be an arbor where she can grow a climbing rose. Wood and metal arbors now come ready to place in the garden. Surprise mother with one and offer to install it for her. No place for an arbor? Then check out the trellises. These too are available in many sizes and materials.

To complete the arbor as a focal point in the garden, buy a climbing rose, a fragrant Confederate jasmine, honeysuckle or clematis. A bench to place under the arbor might be added now or later when you are looking for a birthday gift.

Gifts of trees and shrubs will outlast any other gifts. Does your mother's yard need a spring flowering tree to replace the dogwood that died recently? Choose among those you have seen blooming here this spring—Japanese magnolia, fringe tree, crabapple, flowering cherry, or silverbell. Special accent shrubs reminiscent of the fragrant ones left behind at a former home will also be a hit. Some of these may be gardenia, tea olive, banana shrub, mock orange, or native azaleas. Non-fragrant ones might be the new Endless Summer hydrangea, or old favorites such as oakleaf hydrangea, abelia or spirea.

Help mother reflect the beauty of her flowers in a gazing ball. The large shiny glass balls used in gardens a generation ago have made a come back recently in many sizes and color designs. They are secured on stands in flowerbeds or along a garden path. Other garden ornaments include sculptures of every kind, bird houses and feeders.

The gardener's gift list is endless with items of every price range and for every interest. Show Mom how much you appreciate her with something for her garden.

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