

Tools for Gardening Success

High quality, well designed hand tools can make your work so much more efficient and enjoyable! We strongly encourage spending the money for quality tools. If taken care of properly, you can pass them on to your children or grandchildren.

Our top 10 recommended hand tools*:

1. Digging Fork: Useful for both initial digging of garden and harvesting root crops (make sure it's an English, hand forged one).
2. Stirrup Hoe: Very fast and efficient weeding tool (look for one with replaceable blades).
3. 30" Bed Preparation Rake: Fast seedbed preparation. Doubles as a row marking jig! It's actually a hay rake, so it works well for raking up organic matter for composting or mulching.
4. Broadfork: After initially working up the soil with a digging fork, you will forever after be able to keep it loose with this delightful tool. This tool, combined with the 3-tooth cultivator almost makes rototillers obsolete!
5. Colinear Hoe: Upright stance and lightweight design make this tool very efficient for accurate and easy cultivation. Only works with loosened soil.
6. 3-Tooth Cultivator: Very good at mixing compost and amendments into the top few inches of soil. Also good for aerating and cultivating.
7. Standard Shovel: Useful for all kinds of jobs.
8. Standard Garden Hoe: Good for mixing potting soil, hilling potatoes, and making furrows, but not for weeding.
9. Compost Fork: For turning compost piles or spreading leaves, straw, etc. on the garden.
10. Wheelbarrow: Ideally look for big tire, grease fitting, and heavy duty plastic "tub".

For large gardens, we would highly recommend a wheel hoe: It's a great upper body workout while you cover a lot of ground! Many attachments make it very versatile.

The Glaser wheel hoe is available from www.johnnyseeds.com and www.groworganic.com

The Valley Oak wheel hoe is available from www.valleyoaktools.com

The Hoss wheel hoe is available from www.hosstools.com

What about the Rototiller?

Rototillers are great for fine seedbed preparation and incorporating cover crops and other organic matter. But, they can also easily destroy soil structure if overused - leading to soil crusting, compaction, and erosion, etc. (compare to blender). They also greatly speed up the "burning" of organic matter.

If you have one, use it judiciously. Rule of thumb: Only use the rototiller if you are adding organic matter.

If you don't have one, you might be better off spending your money on high quality hand tools instead (which never need an oil change or gas fill up!)

* The first six tools on the list are all available from *Johnny's Selected Seeds*.