

# A Guide To New Gardening Tools

by Laura C. Martin

**A**lthough the idea of slipping bare hands into the soil to begin a garden elicits a lovely image, anyone who has ever gardened knows that it's more romantic than real. Gardening is a lot of fun, but it's a lot of work. Fortunately, there are many products on the market to make it easier. From digging to composting and planting to pruning, there's a tool to ease the workload. Some of the following products are tried-and-true tools with a new twist, others are so unusual and innovative we thought they were worth including.

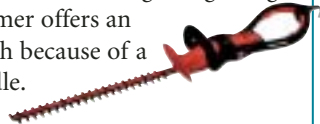
## Power-Lever Hand Pruners (Fiskar):

Any gardener knows that hand pruners are essential for a wide variety of chores; Fiskar has manufactured one of the best. It cuts branches up to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch in diameter but minimizes strain and fatigue. The lever mechanism is built into the handles. Blades are hardened steel that last years. \$19.95, lifetime warranty.



## Pivoting Hedge Trimmer (Black & Decker):

Called the Pivoting Hedge Hog XR, this trimmer offers an extended reach because of a pivoting handle. Adjustable to two different positions, this is great for trimming and shaping hedges and bushes. The 24-inch blade cuts up to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch. Dual-action blades move counter to one another, making for a smoother cut and reducing vibration. \$79.99, two-year warranty.



**Mantis Electric Tiller:** Complete your lawn maintenance and gardening with less time and effort using the lightweight,



easy-to-use Mantis Electric Tiller. Using patented serpentine tines, the tiller tills, cultivates, aerates and digs at various speeds and depths to create showcase gardens and functional yards. \$299, lifetime warranty.

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## Back Porch Compost Tumbler (Gardener's Supply):

If you like the idea of composting but not the idea of walking across the yard to dump kitchen scraps on an unsightly pile of decomposing material, this is for you—a polyethelene drum on a tubular steel frame. Place the materials inside, turn the drum a few times and, within weeks, your coffee grounds will be rich compost for the garden. It's neat, easy and takes up little space. \$199.99.

## Topsy-Turvy Planter (Gardener's Supply):



If you love to participate in the race to pick the first tomato of the summer, look into this: a grow bag you can hang from a deck or

porch. Fill it with potting soil, plant your tomatoes and let it grow! Plants grow from the bottom of the bag upward.

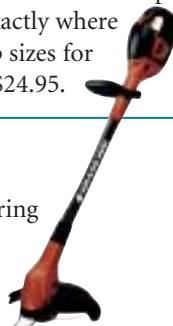
Tomatoes will ripen up to a month earlier than when grown the traditional way, and no weeding or staking is necessary. \$19.95.

## Precision English Seeder (Gardener's Supply):

For gardeners who love to plant from seed, this gadget will help put those tiny seeds exactly where you want them, saving seeds and eliminating the need for thinning. Squeeze the bulb to vacuum up seeds, then place them exactly where you want them. Three tip sizes for different kinds of seeds. \$24.95.

## Rechargeable 12-inch Trimmer/Edger (Black & Decker):

This cordless string trimmer automatically advances the cutting line without requiring a



Garden Tool Caddy totes long and short tools.

“bump.” The handles telescope, making a convenient length for anyone to use, and the weight is moderate: only 6.5 pounds. The trimmer is sold with two 18-volt batteries and a charger. \$99.99.



## Gardener's Multi-tool (Smith and Hawken):

It folds up like a pocketknife and is a handy tool for gardeners, holding shears,

two pruning knives, a bottle opener, a corkscrew and a pruning saw. Weighs less than five ounces. Fits neatly into carrying case. \$19.

## Garden Tool Caddy (Smith and Hawken):

Keep tools handy and organized in this ergonomically designed caddy with easy-rolling pneumatic tires. Powder-coated steel cart is outfitted with space for long- and short-handled tools. Stash gloves, seeds, and twine in the 27-pouch tool organizer, which can slip off to convert to a tool bag with shoulder strap. Removable five-gallon bucket and trash/compost container transport soil amendments and hold garden waste. Tools not included. \$129.

Laura C. Martin is a gardening writer and illustrator in Georgia.