

CARING FOR YOUR GARDEN TOOLS

CLEANING: Should be done after each use.

- You will need: a bucket of sand with oil added to it (motor, mineral or machine oil. Don't use plant-based oils like cooking oil)
- Remove excess mud or soil by hosing off with water or using a stiff brush to scrape it off. The tool should then be pushed into the sand a couple times to coat with oil. The sand is also abrasive and will help clean the tool.
- Sticky sap on pruners or loppers can be removed using soap and water or rubbing alcohol and a cloth. Rinse and dry thoroughly and apply oil to the blade and any moving parts.
- Rust can be removed from tools by using a wire brush. In severe cases, the rusted part can be soaked in vinegar overnight, then brushed with a stiff wire brush to remove the rust. Be sure to thoroughly clean, dry and oil all metal parts when finished.
- Inspect the handles when cleaning your tools. Wood handles should be inspected for cracks and splinters. If they can't be repaired by sanding and wiping with oil to moisten the wood, they should be replaced. Fiberglass handles can start to splinter and should be sanded and painted with a clear coat, or replaced if damage is severe.

SHARPENING: To keep your tools working efficiently.

- You will need a sharpening stone, file and oil. A vise and electric grinder might make some sharpening easier, but isn't essential.
- Always look for the beveled edge of the tool before sharpening. You only want to sharpen the beveled side.
- For shovels and hoes, the bevel is on the front. Using the file or grinder, work along the bevel, keeping your sharpening tool at the same angle as the bevel. A vise will make this job easier. When the tool is sharp enough, make a quick pass with the file up the back of the edge to remove any burrs that have formed.
- Pruners and loppers should be sharpened with a sharpening stone. Again, always look for the beveled edge. It's easier to sharpen the blade if you take the pruners apart, but it's possible to do a good job with them together, it just may be a little more difficult. Make a mark with a sharpie or felt pen along the bevel, then, holding the sharpening stone at the same angle as the bevel, make circular motions along the blade until the ink is gone. Use a quick pass with the stone up the back of the blade to remove any burrs.
- For a quick touch-up sharpening, the multi tool sharpener works quickly and easily.

STORAGE OF TOOLS: "Put your tools away."

- To extend the life of tools, they should be stored in a dry place away from the sunlight.
- Rain can cause metal parts to rust and the sun will dry out wooden or fiberglass handles causing them to splinter or crack.

- Tools should be stored before long-term storage (like over the winter). Especially if your shed is leaky or tends to collect moisture.

HOSE CARE: Because hoses should last more than one season.

- The ends of the hoses are the weakest points. When pulling a hose, one hand should be holding the hose, not just the nozzle.
- Remove kinks from hoses by flipping the hose, not just pulling them out. If you can't flip the kinks out, go back and undo them by hand. And consider investing in one of the hoses that don't kink easily.
- When you finish using the hose, don't just drop the nozzle. Set it on the ground, or better still, carry it back to the faucet to turn it off.
- Roll up the hose when not in use.
- Store hoses in garage or shed over the winter.
- Replace washers in the beginning of every year.

NEW TOOL INTRODUCTION: Because there's always room for one more.

- The right tool for the job.
- Quality of tools based on amount of use.
- When it comes to pruners, size matters.