

Simple hand tools make great gifts for gardeners

As holiday shoppers flock to malls, department stores and websites to find the perfect gifts for their loved ones, they might want to think about the perfect gift for the gardeners in their lives.

Hand tools are perhaps the most-thought-about gifts for gardeners, particularly beginning gardeners, said Dennis Patton, horticulture agent for K-State Research and Extension in Johnson County. That includes pruning saws, loppers, clippers and scissors. Many of today's gardening hand tools come in various sizes to help fit people's hands better and hopefully put less stress on the muscles.

"Unfortunately, when you're doing a lot of pruning, sawing, dead-heading and clipping, that's repetitive motion, which is what causes tendinitis and sore muscles," Patton said.

In addition to coming in various sizes, Patton said most gardening hand tools today have handles that help people get a better grip on them. Some tools even have longer arms and handles for people to strap on to their arms, which relieves strain on their wrists and hands from doing all of the movement and spreads out the motion to a larger part of the body.

"Anything we can do to protect our bodies, just from the wear and tear, is going to be helpful in the garden," Patton said. "When you go to the garden, you have to think practically over fashion. A few people might stop and talk to you in your yard, but really it's kind of a private time. You need to take care of the body first."

Another way to take care of the body during gardening includes protecting skin from the sun. Patton said other good gift ideas might include a wide-brimmed hat or a hat that also provides a shield

for the back of the neck.

Various types of gloves provide gardeners with protection from the sun, splinters and thorns. Patton said for rose gardeners, he recommends fairly thick leather-type gloves to do pruning work. Thinner gloves are best for doing more detailed tasks, where gardeners need to be able to feel and touch more.

There are many tools that help gardeners get up and down easier as well.

"As a gardener myself, when I was younger I'd just crawl around on the ground and not worry about it, but now when I go to the garden, one of the first things I do is grab my kneeling pads," Patton said. "They're so much easier on the knees. A lot of gardeners will have tools to push themselves back up once they get down on the ground."

Gardeners also need containers to put all of their tools in, Patton said. While many people prefer to carry their tools in inexpensive, re-used five-gallon buckets, some gardeners like containers and storage devices that are easy to fold up but will expand when used in the garden.

Great stocking stuffers for gardeners, Patton said, might include seed packets, gift certificates to local nurseries or even cash tucked away in an envelope with a note telling the gardener to buy something in the spring when many plants are available.

Think unique

Children and young adults who don't have much money to spend on gifts for their parents might consider giving gift certificates for garden and lawn work, Patton said. Parents could redeem the certificates in the next year for raking, mowing, picking up sticks in the yard or lending a hand in the

garden.

"Having the kids around helping not only helps you, but we have to somehow find a way to turn this young generation into outdoorsy people," Patton said. "Most kids are so electronically heavy now. Anything we can do to get them outdoors, enjoy gardening and enjoy the environment is going to be better for their health when they become adults."

Patton said a couple of years ago he didn't know what to get his parents, so he gave them what he called "mad money" to spend on something they wouldn't typically spend their own money on.

"My parents went to the store, and they bought a bird bath, a bird feeder and bird seed," he said. "A couple of weeks later, they called and told me how much fun they were having watching the birds. That's something my parents would've never done if I didn't give them the OK to spend money on things that aren't necessities in life."

Some gardeners might also like decorative items for their lawns and gardens, including wind chimes, flags, solar lanterns and even gnomes.

"(Gnomes) have become one of the best conversation pieces for our extension master gardeners," Patton said. "We actually have a gnome in one of our demonstration gardens that we move around, and it's kind of a weekly chore to find out where that gnome is hiding. I think that it is a personal taste. You have to have fun in life, and if the whimsy of a gnome brings joy to you, then I say go for it."

For information and gardening tips, log on to Patton's Kansas City Garden blog (kcgardens.kansascity.com).



Locals staying busy for holidays

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press Julie Saddler chatted with John Flanagan as she looked over the selection of pies that took up several tables at the Gem Lions Club's pancake feed last Wednesday in the Gem Community Building (above). Mary Hurtt watched one of her customers' babies as she sold jewelry at the annual craft show Saturday at City Limits Convention Center.



On the Beat

COLBY POLICE Last Wednesday

12:09 a.m. – Subject came to the station needing a place to stay. Info provided.
2:08 a.m. – Security check at the B-Hive.
10:09 a.m. – Driving while suspended report filed on incident.
10:44 a.m. – Walk through at college.
1:14 p.m. – Walk through at Colby High School.
7:30 p.m. – Report filed on animal loose.

Thursday

1:01 a.m. – Caller reported a barking dog. Spoke to dog owner, took dog inside.
8:40 p.m. – Caller reported theft.

Friday

1:05 a.m. – Driving under the influence report filed on traffic stop.
3:27 a.m. – Report filed on verbal dispute.
8:42 a.m. – Welfare check. All OK.

10:37 a.m. – Subject came to station about theft.
10:45 a.m. – Funeral block for Baalmann's Mortuary from Methodist Church to Beulah Cemetery.
11:15 a.m. – Car stalled at Franklin and College. Helped move vehicle from roadway.

3:16 p.m. – Caller reported dog at large. Turned over to Colby Animal Clinic.

10:15 p.m. – Caller reported being harassed.

10:25 p.m. – Walk through at Walmart.

11:04 p.m. – Caller reported subject pointing gun. Criminal threat, phone harassment report filed.

Saturday

12:16 a.m. – Walk thru at Twisters.

8:04 a.m. – Caller reported subject drunk and causing problems.

10:50 a.m. – Funeral block for

Baalmann's Mortuary from Sacred Heart Catholic Church to Beulah Cemetery.

1:21 p.m. – Funeral block for Pauls Funeral Home, Oberlin to Sacred Heart Cemetery.

2:48 p.m. – Caller reported five juveniles out on the ice at Villa High Pond. Spoke to juveniles.

11:34 p.m. – Security check at Meadow Lakes.

11:58 p.m. – Security check at the American Legion.

Sunday

12:41 a.m. – Caller reported a suspicious vehicle. Report filed for driving under the influence.

2:03 a.m. – Security check at Twister's.

2:22 a.m. – Security check at the B-Hive.

4:36 a.m. – Caller reported suspicious incident. Everything OK.

4:55 a.m. – Security check to residence.

1:14 p.m. – Spoke to subjects out on the ice at Villa High Pond.

2:34 p.m. – Caller reported issue pertaining to children. Civil matter.

5:17 p.m. – Caller reported subject damaging vehicle.

6:31 p.m. – Caller reported needing individual removed from residence. Everything OK.

9:33 p.m. – Walk through at Walmart.

10:09 p.m. – Walk through at Walmart.

Monday

5:55 a.m. – Security check to residence.

8:32 a.m. – Helped stranded motorist at Oasis.

9:59 a.m. – Caller reported bank missing. Report filed.

12:32 p.m. – Caller reported hit and run.

5:41 p.m. – Report filed about counterfeit bill.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Thursday

8:58 a.m. – Took two inmates to

Scott County Sheriff's Office.
8:51 p.m. – Booked Raymond Michael Fagan.

Friday

9:23 a.m. – Walk through at Brewster School.

2:36 p.m. – Caller reported vehicle speeding westbound in the 2500 block of County Rd. Q. Not found.

3:43 p.m. – Warrant served on Matthew Salinas.

11:35 p.m. – Caller reported hearing gun shots in Rexford. Not found.

Saturday

12:35 a.m. – Booked Shawn Joseph Beagley.

10:50 a.m. – Funeral block for Baalmann's Mortuary from Sacred Heart Catholic Church to Beulah Cemetery.

4:52 p.m. – Warrant served on Tyler Jordan Fisher.

6:06 p.m. – Booked Fisher.

10:14 p.m. – Caller reported being harassed in Rexford.

11:20 p.m. – Oakley Police Department advised of cattle out at U.S. 83 and County Rd. C. Got them back in.

Sunday

5:18 p.m. – Narcotics violation report filed on traffic stop on I-70

at mile 59.

6:35 p.m. – Booked Carson Rogers Tingler.

7:47 p.m. – Booked Thomas Henry Felts.

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