

## **Great Garden Tools**

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When I do any project around my house or business, I want to make sure that my tools fit the needs of the job. It's important to use your tools for the purposes for which they were designed. Often, people will grab any old tool out of the shed to do their work, but that can cause problems. Using the wrong tool for the task can sometimes cause the job to take longer, require you to work harder and allow the end result to suffer.

Now, you wouldn't expect a watchmaker to use a pipe wrench, nor would you see a ditch digger using a tablespoon. I know these examples are a little extreme, but the principle is the same: Choose the right tool for the job. To help you with this edict, I've listed a few of my favorite gardening tools below.

### **Hula Hoe**

This old-timer is a great way to get rid of weeds and unwanted grasses.

### **Dual-Blade Hoe**

This is a new take on a classic. You can use this to slide back and forth for weeding or tearing out vines. But the real benefit of owning one of these babies is the angles of the blades. When planting seeds, use them to move soil to make a perfect furrow without having to bend over. Just stand, slide the soil over, drop the seeds and go!

### **Trenching Shovel**

If you've got to dig a trench for a sprinkler system or if you're burying cable, a regular shovel will cause too much stress on your back. But the blade on this tool is long, narrow, sharp and angled perfectly to dig even trenches efficiently.

### **Small-headed Shovel**

Almost everyone has a shovel in the garage and I'll betcha that it's one with a big head (8 to 12 inches). These are fine for some jobs, but to dig holes for planting, or other small tasks, a regular shovel makes you work harder for no good reason. But nothing breaks through our hard-packed soils like a pointed, small-headed shovel (4 to 6 inches wide).

### **Flat-nosed Shovel**

When you're moving fill dirt or spreading gravel, a flat-nosed shovel is the way to go.

### **Sharp Shooter**

This tool is meant to help you dig into hard-packed soils. It's essentially a small-headed shovel with a lot of weight and beefed-up construction. The handle is extra long, usually metal and weighted so you can slam it down and break apart whatever you're digging into. This baby is so tough that it can bust through cement. You can find it at irrigation supply stores.

**Fruit Picker**

Tried and true, this tool gets a lot of use at my place, collecting fruit that's too high for me to reach. At the end of a long pole, there's a little basket with a claw. Maneuver the basket around citrus or fruit, and give a tug. The claw pulls the fruit off the stem and the basket holds the fruit until you can get it to the breakfast table.

**Soaker Hose**

This hose is great for watering plants, grasses, gardens and just about anything. It looks just like a regular black garden hose, except it has a lot of tiny holes around it that allows water to seep out and soak into the ground. By the way, a good addition to the hose is a mechanical timer that attaches to the hose spigot and does not need electricity.

**Soil Probe**

A soil probe allows you to determine whether or not you're watering your trees, gardens, shrubs and lawn deeply enough. For instructions on making one of these great little tools, read my Summer Vegetable Gardens column on [azfamily.com](http://azfamily.com).

Have fun in the garden!