

Tips for New Gardeners Part 1 - Essential Tools

Getting out into the garden is increasingly popular once more, many people find that it helps them to relax and there is a sense of satisfaction as you see your plants grow and your garden develop into something special. In this series of articles I will introduce new gardeners to the art of gardening. It is not something that can be learnt overnight, but that is part of the appeal. There is always something new to learn, no matter how old, young or experienced you are!

Clearly, you are going to need some tools to get started. When you go to the Garden Centre or the hardware shop to buy your first set of garden tools, you will be faced with a bewildering array. So what do you really need? The first question to ask is “am I a vegetable gardener, an ornamental gardener or both?” For most people, the answer will probably be both, a lot depends on the size of your garden and why you want to garden. So this set of tools should cover both needs and assumes that you are starting a garden from scratch - just a bare patch of ground, no hedges, shrubs, lawn etc.

Garden Fork - essential tool for breaking the ground

Garden Spade - needed for turning over the soil and digging holes for larger plants

Hand Trowel - great as a mini-spade for planting bulbs, bedding and small plants

Hoe - quick weeding tool, but don't let the weeds get too large or you will need the trowel!

Rake - for preparing seedbeds and can also be used to gather up leaves etc.

Trug - gardening basket for collecting and moving weeds, stones etc (if your garden is large, get a wheelbarrow instead)

Kneeling mat - these can range from a simple foam pad to a framework. They save wear and tear on your knees and avoid the pain of kneeling on a stone that you did not notice!!

If you have a neglected and overgrown garden you would need to consider buying these tools...

Secateurs - sharp hand tool used for trimming shrubs, roses and similar woody plants

Loppers - similar to secateurs but with stronger and larger jaws, longer (often extendible) handles for trimming thicker branches

Shears - for trimming foliage and cutting down large weeds prior to digging them out

OK, so what about the quality? Beware of the very cheapest tools as they will not last long, especially if they are used a lot but there is no need to buy the most expensive either, unless your garden is large or your soil is heavy clay. When you buy, check that the handles are firmly fixed and don't feel flimsy, that the metal parts look to be well machined and the shafts are not warped.

So, setting up as a new gardener need not cost a fortune, but you will need to spend some money on gardeners tools, however, if you spend your tool budget wisely, it will leave more for the hard and soft landscaping of your garden.

Do you want your garden to be the envy of friends, family and neighbours? Then contact Luke Harrison Gardening Services to arrange your [Landscape Gardener](#) or garden maintenance in the Derby - Burton area.