

## Gardening Supplies 101

Recent trends have shown that more and more people are turning to gardening as their hobby of choice. It may be due to the fact that gardening forces us to relax # which is definitely something we can all do a little bit more. Or, it may be that we have an inherent need to leave our commercial and corporate lifestyles behind, if just for a little while, and get a little closer to the world around us. Whatever the reason, we have rediscovered what generations before us always knew # that gardening gives a satisfaction, and a bountiful harvest, that no other pastime can provide.

There is certain resurgence in the popularity of gardening, and manufacturers have been quick to stake their claim and reap the rewards. There is no shortage of gardening supplies on the market, available at retail stores, through mail order and online. Whether your garden is limited to a balcony, or spans across an acre of property, you can easily find all of the gardening supplies you need. Fertilizer, soil, tools, seeds and plants are just a car ride, mouse click or phone call away.

Regardless of what you're planting, there are some gardening supplies you just can't do without. If you have a garden plot, you'll need a shovel, spade or hoe for digging. You'll need watering supplies, like a garden hose and sprinkler. You might also require pots for balcony or patio planting, gardening gloves, pruning shears and a rake. It's a good idea to pick up a few bags of compost or good quality potting soil to mix in with your existing soil. Potting mixes are readily available to suit a variety of needs, including organic, cactus, root development and see-starting potting mixes.

### Maintenance

Once your garden is planted, you'll need to tend it regularly. Depending on where you live, you'll need one or more of the many soil additives that are available. This adds nutrients and helps balance the soil, ensuring healthy plant life. Miracle-Gro is one of the most popular growing enhancements for plants, but there are many other types to choose from. Fertilizers come in a variety of mixtures, like Triple 13 and 10-20-10. If you're not sure what type of fertilizer is best for your garden, take a soil sample to your local garden center. They'll be able to test the soil for you, or let you know where soil tests are available. Look for organic fertilizers to minimize the harm on the water supply and ecosystem.

Some gardens, like vegetable and herb plots, may require different gardening supplies than regular flower gardens require. For instance, if you are growing tomatoes you'll need a tomato cage and ties to keep the plants upright and to protect them from the wind. Many plants, like flowering vines, like to have support to grow to their full potential. If you've planted climbing plants, be sure to provide a fence or trellis for their support.

When winter arrives, a whole new selection of gardening supplies begins to fill store shelves. Frost will destroy most garden plants, so annuals and tender perennials must be brought indoors or protected from the frost. Of course, greenhouses are the best option for protecting your plants, but they are not options for everyone. Tender potted plants can be moved indoors when night falls, or you can simply cover the plants with a tarp to keep them dry. If the temperature drop is extreme, a heat lamp may be used to keep plants warm and give them extra light.

### No limits

Don't limit your garden shopping to tools and essentials. There are scores of gardening supplies on the market with the sole purpose of creating beauty and interest within your garden walls. Decorative flowerpots, figurines, sundials and wind chimes all add charm to your unique outdoor space. Other decorative touches have definite practicality, such as bricks and stones for garden pathways, pretty lighting for accent and security, and lawn furniture to relax after a job well done.

Our generation of movers and shakers has realized the importance of getting back to basics, if only for a little while. Gardening provides the perfect escape no matter where you live. Pick up the tools and supplies you need to get gardening, and you'll find that while your tending your garden, you're also tending your soul.