

Most jobs are made easier when the correct tool for the job is used and gardening is no exception. The correct tool is not necessarily the most expensive or specialist; the best tools suit the capabilities and needs of the user. Here is a selection of tools that due to their lightweight and ergonomic design make gardening much easier:

Cutting

- **Secateurs – ratchet pruners**, the ratchet mechanism requires several squeezes to make the cut, reducing the pressure needed and therefore is good for people with weaker grip or arthritis. Available from Darlac, Draper and Spear & Jackson.
- **Pruners** from Fiskars have a soft grip on the top handle and a finger loop on the bottom which makes it easier to hold.
- **Loppers – Ratchet Lopper** from Darlac, very light with the power to cope with heavy work.
- **Longer reach pruners – the Snapper** from Darlac, lightweight with a cut and hold mechanism which can be used one-handed. Several lengths are available.
- **Trimming – one handed shears**, from Gardena, Wolf and Darlac. Lightweight telescopic hedge shears from Darlac. Battery powered hedge trimmers and grass trimmers from Grey Technology make cutting jobs much easier, plus they are cordless.

Hand tools – the Peta Easi-grip range includes a trowel, fork and cultivator with optional arm support cuff. The handle is vertical, putting the wrist into better alignment when working, reducing strain and effort needed. The cuff allows the strength of the forearm to be used and prevents the tool from being dropped. Peta also supply an add-on handle, which can be used with an arm support cuff, to adapt existing hand tools.

Weeding – Swoe Cultivator by Fiskars is a versatile type of hoe that can be pushed and pulled, can be used with one arm if a Peta add-on handle is attached.

Kneelers – widely available. Look out for ones which can be used as a kneeler or a seat.

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Multi-change – there are several ranges available from suppliers such as Gardena, Fiskars and Spear and Jackson. A wide range of tool heads is available to attach to telescopic or fixed length lightweight handles.

Digging – choose a lightweight **border spade** or **fork**. Peta long-reach Easi-grip tools are good for people who garden from a chair and for reaching into raised beds. Cultivators are available in the multi-change ranges.

Mowing – there are many ranges of mowers but battery powered machines eliminate the need for an external power source and a cable. There are also several **automatic** and **robotic mowers** available such as those from Robomow.

Moving things – **two-wheeled barrows** with pram handles are the easiest to use and can be steered with one hand; **pot movers** are ideal for moving pots and heavy objects; **caddies** and **folding carts** are good for moving hand tools and compost around the garden; a **tool belt** or an **apron** keeps hand tools within easy reach.

Tidying up – the **garden gripper** from Gardena is useful for picking up things without bending and can be used with one hand.

Grabber-rakes have a two-in-one action of raking and picking up leaves and other waste material.

Watering – the **Nucan** range of lightweight plastic, well balanced watering cans that have a button to control the rate of water flow. This reduces the amount of tipping required and therefore reduces arm strain. **Watering lances** extend reach, are good for watering hanging baskets, can easily be used from a chair and with one hand.

There is more information about all of these tools and many more on Thrive's website www.carryongardening.org.uk