

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 6-16-04) Garden Tools, ©2005

With Fathers Day this weekend I thought I'd share some tool picks with you. It's not too late to race out and try to find one of these tools for your dad for his special day.

My all time favorite tool (not for sale anywhere) belongs to Will Seabury. It's his favorite tool, an old "chisel" fifteen inches long and more than sixty-years old. Will inherited it with his father's tools. The tool is a regular length chisel, but somebody welded a handle (like a long railroad nail) onto it. Will thinks it was probably used to shear off bolts that needed to be replaced. In today's world it's an awesome dandelion, buttercup and other obnoxious weed remover. It works especially well on crushed rock paths.

Since you can't buy Will's tool, you might want to search out a Japanese tool called a Hori-Hori. It's a digging tool also used for cutting, prying and scraping. Hori-Hori's were originally used for excavating Bonsai specimens from the mountains. Most Hori-Horis come in either carbon or stainless steel finishes. The tools are 11-3/4 inches long including the 6-1/2-inch by 1-3/4-inch blade. Blades have one beveled and one serrated edge. The wooden handle is thick and flat fitting comfortably in the hand. Nearly every gardener I know either has a Hori-Hori or covets a Hori-Hori. This tool would make a perfect gift for dad.

Dorothy Lindquist's two favorite tools are a winged weeder and a shrub rake. I've been pondering how to describe the shape of the winged weeder and the only visual word image I can come up with is the stealth bomber. Better yet check out a photo at <http://www.wingedweeder.com>. Dorothy uses her winged weeder with expertise and she let me try it out – you can dig up weeds with one swipe, hoe a row and dig all at the same time. This is really a great all-purpose tool. When Dorothy uses the winged weeder to dig up weeds, she cleans up the debris with her shrub rake. Shrub rakes are narrower than regular fan rakes making them perfect to fit into small spaces. Shrub rakes can reach under shrubs, and are ideal for maneuvering around perennials and other plants.

Bev Layton received a Mantis tiller several years ago for her birthday and we all visited her in her garden to see this amazing "baby rototiller." It weighs twenty pounds and can dig down to ten inches, making rows nine-inches wide. You can check out the Mantis at <http://mantisgardentools.com/home.asp>. The Mantis even works to rototill raised beds and between plantings in vegetable and garden beds.

When I first started gardening years ago I couldn't figure out all the different shovels. Why is the pointed shovel called a "round shovel?" And sometimes they're called spades. Go figure. Well here's the scoop on which does what according to the photos and descriptions at [http://www.ames.com/right\\_tool/shovels.html](http://www.ames.com/right_tool/shovels.html). The "round point shovel" is good for digging, planting, scooping, cutting sod and small roots. The square point shovel is good for moving loose materials such as sand, gravel and topsoil. It's also good for shaping trenches and for landscape grading. The garden spade is narrower than the square point shovel with sharper angles on the edges. It's ideal for edging flowerbeds and

walkways. My niece, Kelly, who just moved back to Poulsbo from Texas, uses the garden spade with relish weeding her overgrown new back garden. The website says the garden spade is ideal for edging flowerbeds and walkways. There's also a narrow spade called a drain spade used for digging narrow trenches and also works well for transplanting shrubs and trees.

Several years ago someone told me about a "French hoe." I Googled in "French hoe" but trust me you don't want to do that. The correct name for this tool is "Dutch hoe." It's a long-handled tool. A rectangular blade is attached to a horseshoe shaped shank. Gardeners can slide the blade back and forth to cut up and extricate weeds. Many gardeners swear by it. Visit <http://www.seedsofchange.com> to see this tool for yourself.

My husband Pat's favorite tool is the "Red Dragon." We've reached a pact though and he doesn't use it anymore. It's a torch attached to a hose attached to a propane tank. The "Red Dragon" works well to "melt" weeds in and along walkways. The heat from the flame bursts the capillaries in the plants and they shrivel up and die. But many gardeners singe the weeds instead. You might want to try the "Red Dragon" yourself but we've decided Will Seabury's tool works better for our walkways. Happy Father's Day guys.

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