

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 06-29-05) Cool Tools for Gardeners © 2005

My friend Mary Gleysteen asked me to try out a new tool called the PotLifter invented by her friend Dan Davis. It's a two person tool which is fun for couples or gardening friends. We used ours to move a huge pot and it worked great. The PotLifter comes in its own rip-stop nylon carrying and storage case. Everything comes packaged in a plastic display tube that can even be recycled as a bird feeder. An extremely complete and thorough set of directions is included with the PotLifter. The PotLifter is available locally at Bainbridge Gardens.

The idea actually came to Dan on "October 21, 1987." Dan remembers the date because his neighbor, a garden columnist for the "Mercer Island Reporter" named Reynold Atlas wrote a column about Dan's new invention. Reynold and Dan's son Tyler (now a Sophomore at Cornell University in New York) grew a giant pumpkin weighing over 200 pounds. Dan and Reynold couldn't get a hold on the pumpkin to move it to Reynold's porch where it would be carved into a giant jack-o-lantern for Halloween. Dan was into rock climbing so he thought they should try climbing slings and nylon rope. "Using my makeshift invention we picked the pumpkin right up," he said.

"I forgot about it for years until my wife and I started gardening in containers because our garden was full to capacity. She was always asking me to move heavy pots full of plants around the garden. I couldn't find my old invention from the pumpkin moving experience, so I began experimenting. One hundred proto-types later I had the PotLifter," Dan said. He figured if he and his wife liked it others would too. "I began asking friends to try it out. Everyone loved it but some had trouble with assembly of the ropes and straps. I've got it perfected now and it's very user firendly," said Dan. "The straps on the new product are very stiff and its construction prevents the straps from twisting," he said.

He designed the PotLifter to weigh only 1-1/2 pounds yet it can be used to easily pick up 150 pounds. Dan designed the storage case so the PotLifter can be stored and hung easily on a hook in a shed or garage. "I wanted gardeners to have to use their legs to lift, not their backs. The PotLifter is designed so the users have to stand far enough away from the pot to lift with their legs," he explained.

While I'm on the subject of tools today I thought you'd like to know about two tools for popping weeds right out of your garden. I've had a "Weed Popper" for several years. It's especially good at evicting dandelions from their homes. Weeds easily pop out of the garden with no bending or kneeling. The ergonomics of this tool is great for both men and women. The "Weed Popper" has a wooden handle and rust resistant zinc plated foot level action popper. In addition to removing dandelions it also makes short work of thistles and other prickly or tap-rooted, hard-to-extricate weeds. It's available locally at Home Depot and Ace Hardware.

Fiskars sent me a new tool to trial called "UpRoot," a weed and root remover. It's another way to pop out your pesky weeds and roots. The shaft is lightweight plastic. You step on the long metal tines and pull the handle towards you. Viola' the weeds pop out. It works

best when the soil is moist (or even wet). It's also a cool tool but I'm pretty hooked on my "Weed Popper." You can find the "UpRoot" locally at Valley Nursery, Ace Hardware and Home Depot. Go check it out and see what you think.

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