

IN THE GARDEN

Gathering a late harvest of gifts

Green thumbs up: Ten items from tools to twine that would be welcome under the tree



Steve Whysall

Oh dear, the big day is closing in fast. Have you bought all your gifts? Let's imagine you're still looking for a present for the gardener in your life — a last-minute something you could pick up today and feel good about.

I went looking this week and found 10 interesting items that might work. Take a look. You never know, one of these could be perfect.



V&A watering can, secateurs and cultivator

This beautiful tool set from the Victoria and Alberta Museum in London is decorated with a 1953 Palamos fabric designed by Sylvia Chalmers. I don't think I've ever seen such an ornate and beautifully decorated tool set.

You don't have to buy the whole set. The secateurs (British for pruners) and cultivator are sold separately.

Price: Watering can (\$60.00), secateurs (\$33.99) and garden cultivator (\$37.99)

Available at: The Garden Shop, VanDusen Botanical Garden

Super gnome

Let's face it, if you're going to have a gnome in your garden — and I see no reason why you shouldn't despite what British writer Nancy Mitford said — you might as well get a big, burly, super gnome, one that makes a powerful and unmistakable statement. This splendid specimen with deeply wrinkled face, white beard and Santa-size belly stands almost 1.2 metres tall, from boot bottom to the tip of his pointy purple hat.

Price: \$499

Available: Art Knapp Plantland, Port Coquitlam



Seeds Are Easy kit

Sprouting seeds to create edible micro-greens or ingredients for tea or to grow purely for fun is one of the hottest new trends in indoor gardening. Seeds Are Easy kits offer you a wide selection of options: tomato, lavender, chives, basil, camomile, parsley, white mustard, thyme and mint. Kits come with attractive burlap bags with growing jar and seeds plus step-by-step instructions.

Price: \$14.99

Available: Canadian Tire Stores



Memory foam kneeling pad

Rudyard Kipling was right: "Half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees."

But it gets more painful as the years go by, so kneeling pads help a lot, especially when there is a lot of weeding or bulb planting to do. This kneeler has a thick core of dense EVA foam to take away the sting of any pointy, rough sticks and stones underneath. It measures 50 by 30 centimetres (20 by 12 inches) and comes in red, teal or green.

Price: \$39

Available: Lee Valley Tools



Game of Thorns gloves

These industrial-strength gloves made by Burnaby-based Watson Gloves are popular with rose lovers who know what a drag it can be to get cut to ribbons when snipping away in the rose garden. With their "extended gauntlet cuff," these gloves give you outstanding coverage for the job at hand. These are also very useful when you have other prickly jobs to do such as yanking out blackberry plants or cleaning up yucky perennial borders.

Price: \$21.95

Available: Most garden shops, GardenWorks and Maple Leaf garden centres



Gardener's Shoes

These stylist rubber garden shoes are a little step up on the average Wellington boot or duck shoe, being a tighter fit and totally waterproof. They offer good overall protection with a thick rubbery sole and comfortable flex-fabric fit around the ankle. Gardeners will also appreciate how easy it is to slip them on and off.

Price: \$62.50

Available: Lee Valley Tools



Cherry tree for spring

We need to plant more trees to get Vancouver's tree canopy growth bigger and better, so this works on a few levels, both as a long-lasting gift and as one that benefits everyone. Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is offering, for a bargain price, a choice of six top cultivars: 'Whitcomb,' 'Akebono,' 'Somei-yoshino,' 'Amanogawa,' 'Kanzan' or 'Shirofugen.'

You give the pink gift coupon and the recipient gets to pick up and plant a four-year-old, 1.6-metre (five-foot) tree between April 30 and May 1. For all the details, go to vcbf.ca

Price: \$49.99

Available: From the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival's website at vcbf.ca



Waxed amaryllis

A fantastic party gift, they come with their own stand, require no watering, which means no mess or fuss, and flower beautifully for a long time. The bulbs were grown in Brazil, which preconditions them to burst into bloom the moment they are placed in a warm, bright room. The bulb is waxed and polished, giving it a beautiful, festive golden sheen.

Price: \$24.99

Available: GardenWorks stores



Stocking stuffers

It's always a treat to get a quality garden magazine and the British ones are always so much fun to read. They make excellent stocking stuffers. Or you can combine them with an inexpensive trowel, gloves or basic ball of plant twine to make a very useful gift.

Price: \$11.99

Available: Chapters, quality news agents or the Garden Shop, VanDusen Gardens



Fiskars pruning tools

All hardcore gardeners love quality tools, especially ones that make the job of pruning and cutting away dead or damaged branches a lot easier. Fiskars makes excellent tools for this purpose. This heavy duty 15-inch hand-pruning saw and medium duty 3/4-inch bypass lopper would certainly be welcome under my tree.

Price: Pruning saw, \$24.99; bypass lopper, \$32.99

Available: Home Depot

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