



# South Dublin Allotments Association

## General Tips for Gardening Tools - Factsheet No. 2

Here are some general points on tools to work your allotment. No matter what type of gardener you may be, everyone needs a certain number of basic tools. It is always better to pay more for first-class equipment, since garden tools, though they are bound to come in for a lot of wear and tear, should still last a long time. There are a wide variety of tools available. Always try to choose the one that feels mostly suitable to you in terms of height/length and weight.

### Tools

For a start you will need something like the following:

1. Garden Spade, a lightweight model with T or D shaped handle. The slightly concave steel blade and shank should be forged in one piece, for greater durability.
2. Garden Fork, basic construction same as the spade; many uses in digging, preparation of seedbeds, loosening the soil between shallow rooting plants, etc.
3. A Hoe, most useful in weeding beds and working the soil, there are several types available, e.g.

Draw Hoe, Single-bladed Shuffle Hoe and some combine a weeding tool and small rake.



Draw Hoe



Shuffle Hoe



Combination Hoe

4. A 12-toothed rigid steel Rake
5. A wire Rake with springy steel tines.
6. A Shovel, or a Spade with a shovel-shaped blade
7. A wheelbarrow, or a share in one with a fellow allotmenteer. Fold-up ones are also available.

In addition, a few small tools, such as a trowel for putting in small plants, a hand fork for weeding, a small claw-shaped cultivator, a dibber, garden twine, a knife and a secateur/pruning shears. Gardening gloves should also be included as very useful items.

There may be times when the use of a Strimmer and/or a Rotovator will certainly shorten the preparation time of ground before planting, and, if necessary, spare the wear and tear on your joints. These kinds of tools can be accessed by hiring services or sharing the purchases with a neighbour(s). Before committing to a purchase, make sure that the tool is actually powerful enough to accomplish the task.

Netting, for placing over tender plants as protection against birds and other pests. Depending on the wind situation on your site, small plastic tunnels can be an alternative to netting.

It is a good idea to have a couple of bags for transporting home vegetables from the allotment, otherwise they can make a bit of a mess when wet. They can be kept in the boot of the car.

### **Water**

Watering can and soft spray attachment (rose)

Water hose and sprinkler attachments

Sprayer

A bucket or two is very useful

Some containers for carrying bits and piece around the site

### **Care of your tools and tidiness**

Even the best, and most expensive garden tools will corrode if you don't keep them in good condition. You should never leave anything lying about when you finish work without cleaning it. Every item should be cleaned each time it is used and stored away correctly. A bit of oil or vaseline will protect metal parts.

### **Safe Condition of Plots**

Tools if left lying around your plot can be hazardous and may cause a nuisance to other plot holders. Always prop up or position out of the way when not in use.

### **Disclaimer**

The information presented here is intended as a basic guide only and is not intended by the South Dublin Allotments Association to be fully comprehensive. South Dublin County Council does not necessarily endorse all the contents. Following this guide does not absolve individual plot holders from taking personal responsibility for their own health and safety, e.g. by consulting further with health and safety professionals or medical practitioners. People with a medical condition are usually advised to consult their physician before undertaking any strenuous exercise.

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