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## Tools for Easier Gardening

By Margaret Hagen

Ergonomic tools were originally designed for senior citizens and those with physical ailments, both young and old. Gardeners are now benefiting from ergonomic design principles as specially designed garden tools become more readily available at garden centers, in garden catalogs, and online. When considering a purchase, its best to try these tools out before buying if you can.

Ergonomics is the study of how tools can be adapted to fit specific needs. Ergonomic gardening tools are designed to keep the gardener's body in neutral positions while working. This lessens the stress on joints, muscles and nerves and allows gardeners to work longer while expending less energy.

In general, ergonomic tools will be more expensive than conventional tools. They should also be lighter. The less a tool weighs, the easier it will be on your body. Most often ergonomic tools will have thick handles, similar to those on the OXO Good Grips kitchen utensils. Experts say that the handles should be about 1 ¼ to 2 inches in diameter. Often you will also find that handles are longer to allow you to get a firmer grip on the tool. Handles on shovels may be angled to take stress off your back. Mimic the motions of gardening right there in the store to make sure that the tool fits your body. Resources for tools:

A.M. Leonard  
241 Fox Drive PO Box 816  
Piqua OH 45356-0816  
1-800-543-8955

American Intertool, Inc  
1255 Tonne Road  
Elk Grove Village IL 60007  
1-800-334-3675

Access to Recreation, Inc.  
8 Sandra Court  
Newbury Park CA 91320  
1-800-634-4351

Alsto's Handy Helpers  
PO Box 1267  
Galesburg IL 61401  
1-800-447-0048

The Good Idea  
PO Box 955  
Vail CO 81658  
1-800-538-6690

Ames True Temper  
465 Railroad Avenue  
Camp Hill PA 17001-8859  
1-800-833-3068

S & S Worldwide  
75 Mill Street  
Colchester CT 06415  
1-800-288-9941

Smith and Hawken  
PO Box 8690  
Pueblo CO 81008  
1-800-940-1170

Walter Nicke  
PO Box 433  
36 McLeod Lane  
Topsfield MA 01983  
(508) 887-3388

Mecan aids  
(U.S. dealer for PETA UK, Ltd.)  
21 Hampden Drive  
South Easton MA 02375  
1-800- 227-0877

Radius Garden, LLC  
PO Box 2506  
Ann Arbor MI 48106  
(734) 222-8044