



Hauling Garden Tools with Wheeled Wonders and Trusty Trugs

by Peg Sullivan, UC Master Gardener

Do you have a favorite way for storing and moving tools for your garden work? While gardening is an excellent workout, saving steps in the process is essential. Here are a few tips that I've learned after years of gardening in my large back yard.

Tool station: First, provide an easy access and visible place where tools can be stored together, in the garage or on a rack in a side yard. If they are thrown in a jumble into a cupboard, it's less likely that they will be used, and it can be dangerous reaching into a cabinet and getting poked by a sharp saw or dandelion fork. I have seen clever "stations" tucked around gardens, where smaller tools are stored. A cheerfully painted mailbox provides a large compartment. A bird house with a door provides a handy place to store clippers or trowels. A sturdy plastic box or tube with a lid, mounted on its side, provides dry storage away from the rain. When they are placed atop a post or bench, their height makes it easy to see inside.



Ingenuity is key when creating your "wheeled wonder".

Tool carriers: One of the easiest ways to keep essential tools handy is on a tool belt, with a variety of pouches. A cleaning caddy, a workman's tool caddy, anything with a handle works well. The British use a wooden or plastic "trug". The definition of a trug is "a shallow oblong basket made of strips of wood, traditionally used for carrying garden flowers and produce." A plastic bucket with a tool "skirt" is another handy way to carry tools, as well as providing a bucket top seat to sit on when you reach your destination.

Wheeled wonders: When it comes to gardening, the best invention, by far, is the wheel.

- Dollies (hand trucks): These are great for pushing around a single trash can or moving a potted plant.
- Wheeled benches: Lightweight sitting and kneeling benches now come on wheels, and tools can be stored in aprons on the side or under the seat.
- Wheel barrows: These are great for hauling compost, soils, or rocks, but they get a bit tipsy if they get too full.

- Carts and wagons: One of our Master Gardeners has a little red wagon which follows her everywhere in the garden. Another Master Gardener uses a small motorized truck as she drives around her very large acreage. I have 2 favorites: a wheeled tool cart and a large wood cart with big wheels. The tool cart houses my rakes, scuffle hoe, long-handled clippers, shovels, spades, saw, a trash can, and a few small tools. The large cart, besides hauling compost and branches, holds 2 large trash cans for debris or wide shovels, pitch forks, and buckets.

Before I head into the garden with the wheeled wonders, I put on my leather tool belt, which I up-cycled from a yard sale. Under my belt, I tuck my leather gloves, and place clippers, a bowie knife, and a cell phone in the pouches. It is so easy to reach for the clippers when I see an errant twig or unwelcome tree sprout. The bowie knife is great for cutting string ties, and rope. The phone is handy, but not always needed; sometimes I conveniently forget to tuck that phone into the case. The gloves can be slipped on or off and tucked under the belt in case I need bare hands for dexterity. Too many times when I have set my gloves down on a chair or the ground, visiting foxes have treated them as a favorite chew toy!



Design your tool belt with tools that you use in your garden.

With just a little ingenuity you can create a tool tote that's suitable for your need. Instead of wondering, "Where did I set down that rake?" you can just reach over to those trusty tools that you've collected onto your new wheeled wonder or trusty trug and get back to gardening.

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