



Ten Best Gardening Gifts

by Donna Hauser

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County

Your idea of gardening might be buying potted basil at the store. Your fingernails are clean and your family pet is a Roomba. But, if you have a friend who is a gardener and whose family pet is a worm bin, scented soap and a fingernail brush might not hit the mark. The following gifts, however, will please any gardening person, like me, who thinks a little dirt on a carrot makes it taste better.

1. A magnifying glass. Insect and plant life are dramas unfolding under the lens of a magnifying glass. Useful for identifying friend and foe alike, a good magnifier will be small enough to drop in a pocket and sturdy enough to withstand getting kneeled upon.
2. Gloves. Not those flower-bedecked canvas gloves, but real digging gloves. A pair with one clawed glove and one normal glove, so your friend won't take out an eye brushing dirt off her face with the claw. They come in all colors so you can match them to a birthstone, if you are that kind of gift-giver.
3. Nursery pots. Four-inch pots are great for starting veggies. Gallon pots are great for transplanting those veggies that were started far too early. Basically, you can't go wrong buying nursery pots for your favorite gardener. The pots are just cheap plastic to you, but us, they are precious.

April 15,2020

4. Seed-saving packets. Every gardener has seeds we have collected over the years that we are going to plant next spring. We have to store and label all those seeds until we plant them. (Which we are definitely going to do next spring.) Seed-saving packets are cheap so splurge and put them in a basket with a pen that writes on wet or dirty paper.
5. Fertilizer. Good fertilizer is ridiculously expensive and always needed. Put down those scented soaps and instead choose some gourmet organic free-range seaweed fertilizer for your gardening friend. Watch us gush over a bottle of some liquid food that is oh-so-good but oh-so-smelly! Nod indulgently as you edge toward the door.
6. Self-watering planters. A good planter looks beautiful while not killing your plants. They are expensive, but your friend will appreciate them, and your child will appreciate the value of a dollar as he/she works a part-time job to help you pay your mortgage that month.
7. Pruning shears. Micro-tip pruners are perfect for all plants and fit in a gardening pocket. (Fitting in a pocket is a big plus for gardening gifts.)
8. Plant identification tags. Tags help us gardeners figure out whether that generic-looking tomato plant is heirloom, hybrid, open-pollinated, organic, cherry, grape, plum, beefsteak, or a volunteer that snuck into a pot of squash plants when we had our backs turned.
9. Propagation supplies/season extenders. Cloches to greenhouses, there are so many choices in giving a gift to help plants survive when “rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.”
10. Hand trowel. Not that cheap hand trowel with a frog painted on it. Buy your friend a real hand trowel with a comfortable handle. Your friend will thank you every time they use it.

Is your gardening friend quirky? Maybe so, but any of the above suggestions will be appealing to their gardening persona. Choosing gifts appropriate to those quirks defines you as a caring and attentive friend.

In response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and recent California Department of Public Health and El Dorado County Health & Human Services guidelines, UCCE Central Sierra will cancel all El Dorado and Amador County Master Gardener public events and classes. This cancellation remains in effect through April 30th, and will be updated as public health guidelines change. We realize our public classes are valued by County residents and we especially appreciate your continued support and understanding during this public health challenge. We will attempt to offer our cancelled classes and events at a future time if feasible; please refer to our website <http://ucanr.edu/edmg> which will be updated with the latest changes as they occur. Stay safe and follow recommended health and sanitation practices in the coming weeks.

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For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. We are still available to answer home gardening questions via email mgeldorado@ucanr.edu or call (530) 621-5512, or contact us using the Ask a Master Gardener option on our website. Looking for garden inspiration, while our garden is closed due to COVID-19, our website has pictures, plants lists and much more. [http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration Garden](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden). To sign up for notices and newsletters, see [http://ucanr.edu/master gardener e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news). Master Gardeners are also on Facebook and Instagram; we hope you enjoy our postings and will share them with your friends.