



Tool Sharpening for Single Beveled Tools

1. Clean

Scrub away any dirt or rust by spraying the tool with a disinfectant foaming bathroom cleaner, letting it sit for a few minutes. Use a wire brush or fine steel wool to remove some of the more stubborn rust. Medium-grit sandpaper can be used to remove rust on larger tools such as shovels, hoes, and spades.

2. Inspect

Check for any worn or bent places. If there is too much play between the blades, tighten the nut in the middle and test them for smoothness.

3. Sharpen

Brace or clamp the tool so that it is immovable during the sharpening process. The object is to sharpen the bevel at the original factory angle, which is usually a 15 to 20 degree angle. Hold the file at this angle and, pushing only – never pulling – file in smooth, even strokes, bracing a finger as a backstop on the blade so that it maintains the file at the proper angle. Use a light forward stroke on the full length of the blade to remove as little material as possible. Files are very aggressive and an expensive tool can be ruined if overworked.

To check for sharpness, lightly touch fingernail at a 90-degree angle to the blade.

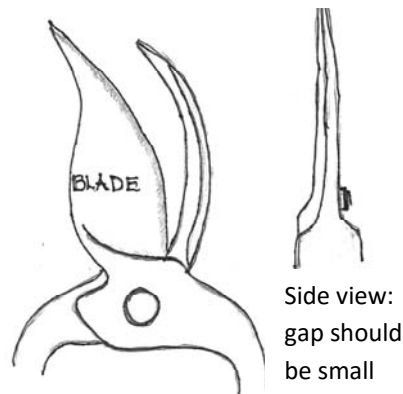
A well-sharpened tool will scrape off a bit of nail dust. Check on the underside of the blade for a slight burr at the edge. Lightly run the file flush with this unbeveled surface to clear it.

4. Lubricate

Use light machine oil to lubricate all clean, sharpened tools. Use a rag to apply a light coat of oil to prevent rust.

Clean wooden handles with a stiff-bristled brush; smooth scratches and splinters with medium-grit sandpaper, then coat with linseed oil.

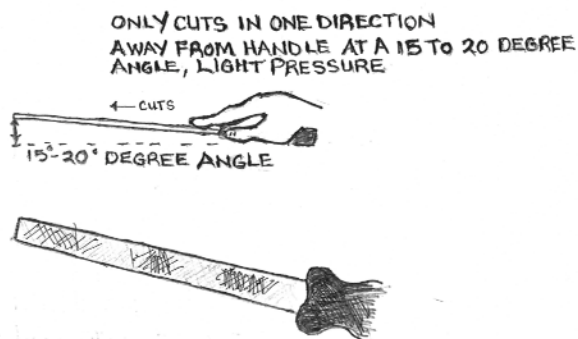
Bypass Pruner



Remove burrs

BACK SIDE OF BLADE
KEEP FILE FLAT

Nicholson Flat Bastard
File 6 inches



Tool Sharpening

Tools and Supplies for a Tool Sharpening Kit

Quantity	Unit	Item	Size	Price
1	each	*Nicholson general purpose flat bastard file (gradual metal removal course finish)	6 inch	\$8 each
1	each	**Adjustable wrench	6 inch	\$2 each
1	each	**Slip joint pliers	6 inch	\$2 each
1	each	**Chip paintbrush	1 inch	\$2 each
1	each	*Nicholson file brush cleaner		\$6 each
1	each	**Evapo-Rust Super Safe Rust Remover	32 oz.	\$8 each
1	6 pack	**Brass brushes (to clean metal)		\$3 each
1	each	*3-IN-ONE oil	3 oz.	\$4 each
1	pack	**Shop towels/rags	25 pack	\$8 pack
1	can	Disinfectant foaming bathroom cleaner	12.5 oz.	\$7 each
1	can	Disinfecting wipes	35 wipes	\$3 each
1	pair	**Safety glasses		\$3 each
*Available at big box stores				
**Available at discount tool retailer				

For general gardening maintenance tasks, keep on hand several pairs of gloves (one light pair and one heavy-duty pair). Wear long sleeved shirt/pullover, a hat, and sturdy shoes.

Tool Maintenance

1. Clean tools after each use. A putty knife is good for scraping off dirt. If tools get rusty, soak them in oil for a few hours, then use a wire brush or fine sand to scrub off the rust.
2. Avoid using cleaners, such as bleach solutions that can damage metal parts of tools, causing pitting or discoloration.
3. Keep cutting tools sharp and lubricated as needed by coating with a light oil (machine or vegetable oil).
4. Store tools where they can be hung and kept out of the way to prevent damage both to the user and to the tools.
5. Keep tools in a dry place to prevent rust.

UCCE Orange County Master Gardeners

<http://mgorange.ucanr.edu> http://mgorange.ucanr.edu/Gardening_Hotline/

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