

Fall Tool Maintenance Checklist

Fall is the perfect time to give your garden tools a thorough cleaning, sharpening, and organization before storing them for winter. Well-maintained tools last longer, work better, and help prevent the spread of garden diseases. Use this checklist to make sure every tool is ready for spring.

Step-by-Step Checklist

- ☐ Gather all garden tools, including hand tools, pruning shears, shovels, hoes, watering cans, and irrigation parts.
- ☐ Use a stiff-bristled brush to scrub off dried soil from metal surfaces.
- ☐ For stubborn dirt, rinse tools with water and dry thoroughly.
- ☐ Disinfect cutting tools with a 1:9 bleach-to-water solution or 70% rubbing alcohol.
- ☐ Rinse disinfected tools and dry completely to prevent rust.
- ☐ Sharpen blades using a sharpening stone, file, or specialized sharpener.
- ☐ Oil metal parts lightly with machine oil or mineral oil to prevent rust.
- ☐ Sand rough wooden handles to remove splinters.
- ☐ Rub handles with linseed oil to preserve wood and improve grip.
- ☐ Check tools for loose screws, bolts, or damaged parts and repair or replace as needed.
- ☐ Drain and coil hoses neatly; clean filters or drip emitters before storing.
- ☐ Hang tools to keep edges off the ground and store in a dry, well-ventilated area.

Supplies Needed

- Stiff-bristled brush
- Bucket or hose
- Bleach or rubbing alcohol
- Sharpening stone or file
- Light machine oil or mineral oil
- Linseed oil
- Sandpaper
- Screwdriver, wrench, or other repair tools

Reflection

Caring for your tools is an act of stewardship. It reflects a heart that values what has been entrusted to you, both in the garden and in life. Just as sharp, clean tools make gardening more effective, a well-tended heart is more prepared to serve with joy.

Journal Prompt

What 'tools' in my life—spiritual disciplines, relationships, habits—might need cleaning, sharpening, or renewal this season? How can I tend to them faithfully before the next season begins?

