



a fresh take
on spring

Spring is here—which can only mean one thing: It’s time to rouse your inner gardener and give it the green thumb’s up. This season, try these tips, tools and hot new items to take your garden from blah to full bloom. By **GINA MAZZA**

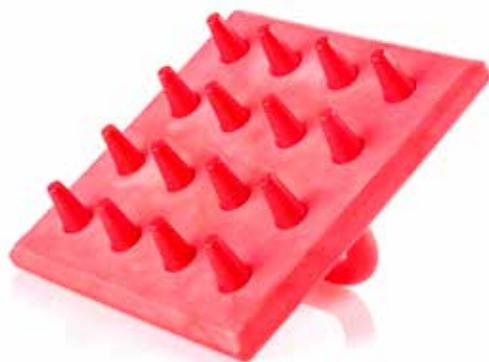
3 TIPS *to re-tool*

Gardeners and their tools can develop long-term relationships. There's no need to give up grandpa's shovel or the weeder whose wooden handle has conformed to your grip. Consider adding to your collection one or more of today's light, efficient tools that save stress on the body.



Avoid The Pinch

Finally, a rose glove that protects your hands from thorns yet is comfortable, breathable and stays flexible even after washing. Miracle Fiber Rose Gloves (\$36.95) are made of synthetic suede that breathes. They're extra long to cover forearms, with padded palms to reduce fatigue. Available at gardeners.com.



Break New Ground

The Garda Dibble (\$19.99) makes seed starting quick and simple. Create neat rows to maximize planting space. Perfect for small urban gardens, suburban plots, raised beds, containers and square-foot patches. And removable pegs allow you to change spacing based on plant type. Available at gardadibble.com.



Pour It On

Watering your plants becomes an art form with the IKEA PS VALLO watering can (\$0.99). Lightweight plastic, it's available in black, red and green. Available at ikea.com.





[1] You Can Go Gnome Again Garden gnomes had their 15 minutes of fame during Travelocity's ad campaign. Now they're content to once again stay close to home in private gardens. Garden gnomes originated in 19th Century Germany and are said to help gardeners with chores overnight. Gardening Gnome, Gnome with Water Can and Gnome with Rabbit are all bobbleheads (\$21.99/each). Available at True Value Hardware stores; truevalue.com.

[2] Go Greenhouse Start your herb garden indoors this spring. The SOCKER Greenhouse (\$19.99) made of powder-coated steel and plastic provides a good environment for seeds to sprout and plants to grow. Available at ikea.com.

[2] Grow a Rainbow When planning your vegetable garden, think outside the same-old color wheel of orange carrots and green beans. Romanesco cauliflower has a vivid green color and striking fractal pattern like a seashell. Its intense purple, green, yellow and orange varieties are vase-worthy, as well as edible. Other options? Yellow Amarillo carrots, Ruby Queen corn and Chocolate Beauty sweet peppers. Available at Johnny's Selected Seeds (johnnyseeds.com), Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (rareseeds.com) or W. Atlee Burpee & Co. (burpee.com).

[4] Have a Seat It's been said that a gardener never sits on his garden bench because there's always so much to do, especially in spring. This year, take time to rest and enjoy

your labors from the vantage point of this galvanized steel garden bench (\$149) by Wiebke Braasch. Available at ikea.com.

[5] Flower Power Don't just show your hometown pride—grow it. Use "The Steel City Garden: Creating a One-of-a-Kind Garden in Black and Gold" (\$17.95) as your guide—the latest book by Pittsburgh garden expert Doug Oster. For more information go to stlynnspress.com. Available at local booksellers and Amazon.com.

[6] Tranquil Touches Add high drama to your outdoor living space with a uniquely designed fire bowl, planter, water stone vessel or fountain (prices vary) by Concrete Zen. Available at concretezen.com.