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## Hand Tools Are Now Environmentally Friendly

When gardeners hear the term "state-of-the-art" garden tools, they may envision power tillers or chain saws. But many of the latest high-tech tools on the market are powered by hand, not electricity or gas - some even follow centuries-old patterns.

And just as shoppers have learned to be "green" consumers, gardeners can learn that "green" can mean more than just growing plants - it can mean environmental awareness.

Hand tools have a number of ecological advantages over power tools. They don't pollute or waste energy. They're quiet and don't ravage the landscape. They're user-friendly, more cost-effective, safer to operate and have fewer breakable parts. Using them can provide a healthy workout and promote fitness (experts estimate that working in the garden can burn from 400 to 600 calories per hour).

If today's hand tools resemble their counterparts from colonial or even Biblical times, it's because they are using a design that has been tested and proven effective over the centuries. The mattock, a tool used for ground-breaking that dates back to Biblical times, is making a comeback as energy-aware gardeners discover its effectiveness. The curved handle, which provides more power, was designed by this country's forefathers.

**Modern Features**

At the same time, modern tools feature many improvements over their predecessors, with heads made from new metals, like ductile iron, that resist rust. Handles are tapered to fit the tool and keep the head from flying off.

Senior citizens should look into the shorter-handled tools that are more lightweight and easier to handle. The shorter tools (10 inches shorter than the standard 36-inch-long handle) are also ideal for gardening in raised beds or other places that require one-handed usage.

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