

Get your garden tools in prime condition

Getting your tools in prime condition is an important part of yard preparation. Here's how to clean your tools and get them ready for the busy season ahead. The sand will help remove dirt from the tools and keep the edges sharp. The oil will keep rust from forming when tools aren't in use.

Materials



Bucket

Deep enough to hold the working end of your tool standing up



Sand

Enough to fill the bucket within 1" of the top



Motor oil

Or any oil or lubricant appropriate for use on metal



Dry cloth

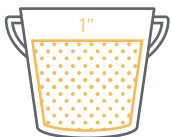


Sharpening tool

Process



1. Wipe down your tools with a dry rag, remove any old dirt, debris or rust



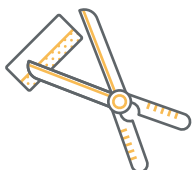
2. Fill your bucket with sand, allowing a 1" space between the top of the sand and the edge of the bucket



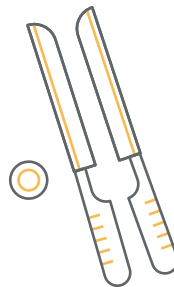
3. Mix the lubricating oil into the sand. Add enough for the sand to be damp and well-oiled but not wet



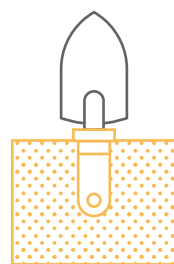
4. Plunge the working end of the tools into the sand mixture, gently moving it up and down



5. For tools that require a very sharp edge, like pruning clippers, use a clipper sharpening tool



6. Tools that are hinged, like pruning clippers, may need to be taken apart or tightened. Use a wrench to loosen the bolt. Take apart the two pieces, clean and oil each piece (you can also dip them in the oiled sand, just remove the sand particles thoroughly), then place the piece back together



7. Wood handled tools may develop splinters over time. Keep them smooth by running a high-grit sandpaper over the handles until the splinters are removed. Finish with a light coat of polyurethane sealant (or look for a spray sealant for greater ease of application)

Your hand tools can be stored in this bucket long term or hang them up so they do not rest on the ground. Now you're ready for spring gardening!