

Bringing in the Harvest: Products for the Kitchen Gardener

by Rita Pelczar



HARVEST SEASON is in full swing across the country. Gathering and savoring the bounty of your kitchen garden is the reward for a season of hard work in the garden. The following tools and products will help you bring in the bounty and make the most of it.

If you harvest enough potatoes or onions to save for winter use, the **Mesh Produce Bags** from Garden Trends (www.gardentrends.com) are worth considering as a storage option. These breathable, woven poly



Mesh Produce Bag

bags are 11 inches wide by 18 inches deep, with a recommended maximum weight capacity of 10 pounds—a good size for home vegetable storage. They're also handy for keeping tender bulbs and tubers over winter. A draw cord secures the contents inside and provides a loop for hanging.



Original Garden Hod

A sturdy basket is handy when your summer and fall vegetables need picking. The **Original Garden Hod** from Gardeners Edge (www.gardenersedge.com) is well made and large enough—with nearly a half-bushel capacity—to carry a load of tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, and squash. Its sides are made of three-quarter-inch-thick pine with rounded birch side rods and a comfortable, steam-bent, wood handle. The durable, PVC-coated wire mesh base allows you to rinse off the veggies and let them drain. For smaller gardens, or smaller garden helpers, the **Garden Hod Junior** has an eight-quart carrying capacity.

Harvesting from fruit trees, of course, requires using a ladder. The safest ladders are tripods, such as the **Strathmore Super-Duty Orchard Ladder** from A.M. Leonard (www.amleo.com). “The most important thing about orchard ladders is the ability to put the pole of the tripod directly next to a tree, or even inside a large shrub, allowing you to safely prune with your weight balanced in front of

you, rather than off to the side, like on an A-frame ladder,” says Dan Scott, associate director of horticulture and River Farm at the American Horticultural Society’s headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. The Strathmore ladder is constructed of lightweight, tempered aluminum, comes in eight-, 10-, and 12-foot sizes, and supports up to 300 pounds. The flared base combined with the third leg provide a solid foundation on non-paved ground; that and the three-inch-wide steps make me feel secure even up high.

I have a stand of grapes that I propagated from my grandmother’s farm many years ago. I use the young leaves for stuffing and the fruit for jam and juice. When it’s time to harvest, the **Grape Shear** from Corona Tools (www.coronatoolsusa.com) can’t be beat. Designed for both thinning and harvesting, its steel-alloy, heat-treated blades are slightly curved, making it easier to get to those hard-to-reach stems, and its rounded tips help reduce spearing and damaging the fruit. It works equally well for harvesting tomatoes and peppers. Co-



Strathmore Super-Duty Orchard Ladder



Pepper Corer Set

rona also makes a short-bladed **Orange Shear–Anvil** for rapid plucking of oranges, grapefruits, and apples.

If you like stuffed or pickled peppers, you’ll appreciate Garden Trends’ **Pepper Corer Set**, which features a small corer for jalapeno peppers, and a large one for bell peppers. For jalapenos, cut off the stem end, insert the corer, twist, and pull out the core. For bell peppers, just insert, twist, and remove the seedy core. The few seeds that are often left behind are easy to remove through the core hole while keeping the pepper intact. Made of durable nylon, both tools are dishwasher-safe.

So gather in the harvest and enjoy the fruits—and vegetables—of your garden labors. You earned it!



Grape Shear

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