

## Potpourri of Gardening Products

by Rita Pelczar

**T**O WRAP up 2018, here are a variety of products that have made this year's gardening more enjoyable and/or efficient for me. From mud-resistant shoes to pest-repelling bird feeders, there's something here to pique every gardener's interest.

Let's face it: Gardening is a dirty business. That's why a good, easy-to-clean pair of gardening shoes is indispensable. This year, I came across **Muckster II Low Boots**, from the Original Muck Boot Company ([www.muckbootcompany.com](http://www.muckbootcompany.com)). Constructed of natural rubber with a neoprene shell, they are sturdy, waterproof, and comfortable—perfect for gardening in any kind of weather. When they get caked in mud, simply hose them off. Unlike backless clog-type garden shoes, these provide good support and protection for the entire foot, as well as great traction. Their breathable mesh lining, which wicks away perspiration, is



removable. They run a bit large—a size smaller than I normally wear was a perfect fit. Of course, I tested the women's Muckster; there's also a version for men. Both are available in a variety of colors.

Winter is a great time to look over your tools and make necessary repairs, especially for tools with moving parts. To assure a smooth clean cut every time, pruners should be cleaned and oiled and their blades sharpened regularly. With the **Multi-Sharp® Pruner & Lopper Guided Sharpener** from Gardener's Edge ([www.gardenersedge.com](http://www.gardenersedge.com)), it only takes a few minutes to return a precision edge to any cutting tool. Just



attach the sharpener onto the backside of the blade and place the sharpening arm through whichever hole gives you the best angle for your pruner's edge. As you move the sharpening stone back and forth over the blade, the proper angle is maintained.

And speaking of sharp, the **Steel Sharpshooter Spade** from Corona ([www.coronatoolsusa.com](http://www.coronatoolsusa.com)) is the right tool for slicing through tough soils. Its 14½-inch-long blade features a rounded tip, and because it's only 5¾ inches wide, it's easy to get into narrow places, such as between plants in a perennial bed. I like it for transplanting perennials and shrubs; it's also good for digging deep and cutting through roots of unwanted plants. I like the heft and the D-grip steel of the short-handled version, with an overall length of 45 inches, but if you prefer a long-handled spade, go for the 63½-inch version.



I don't enjoy spraying for pests, particularly in my vegetable garden, but this year I tried a new product that I found to be effective, safe, and without a toxic odor. **Eco-1 Garden Spray** from Arborjet ([www.arborjet.com](http://www.arborjet.com)) is derived from a



variety of plant oils including linseed, thyme, and peppermint. It is labeled for use on both edible and ornamental crops to control several soft-bodied pests, including aphids, scales, mealybugs, thrips, psyllids, white-

flies, and two-spotted spider mites. It effectively controlled the aphids on my cabbage with a single application. It is also recommended for the prevention and management of a number of fungal diseases, including powdery mildew, black spot, brown rots, and several others. The product has a pleasant minty herbal scent, and it can be used right up until harvest. The downside, as with many organic pesticides, is that repeated applications may be necessary because it leaves little residue.

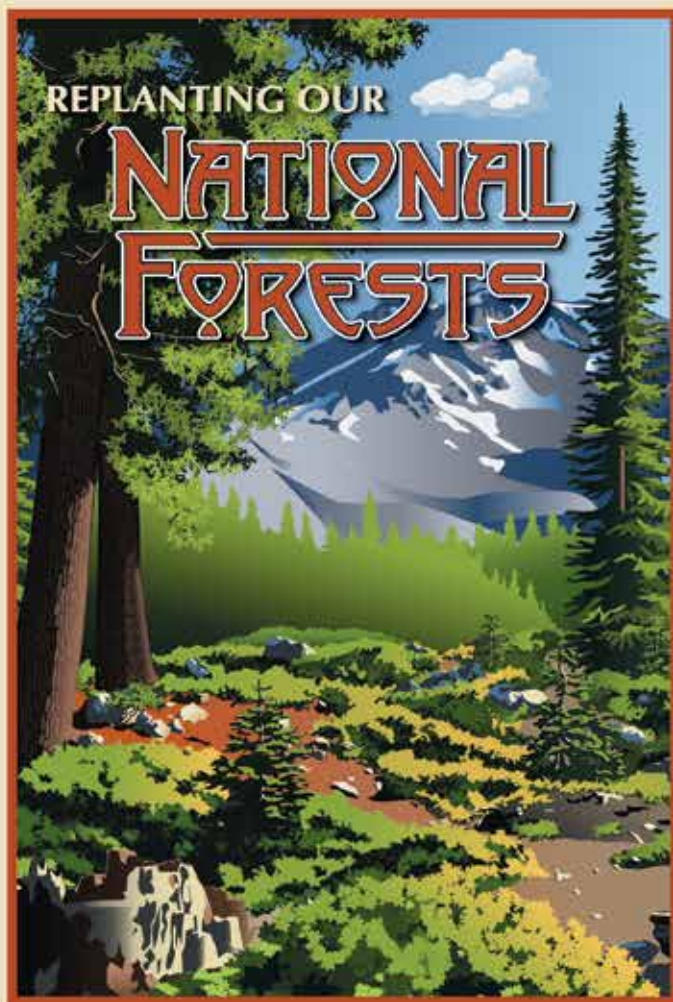
Another type of pest that has made an appearance in my garden are chipmunks, which enjoyed nothing more



than feasting at my bird feeders. So I decided to take action this fall and installed a **Roamwild Pest-Off Feeder** ([www.pestoff-feeders.com](http://www.pestoff-feeders.com)). It has a slick, curved baffle over the feeding tube that gives four-legged marauders no purchase, and the feeding ports are spring-loaded, clamping shut if chipmunks or squirrels decide to jump onto the feeding perch. The product is easy to fill and clean. It comes in several models suited for different types of bird feed.

So enjoy your winter garden: Feed your feathered friends, take time to clean and sharpen your tools, and make plans for all your projects for next year. Here's to a successful 2019 gardening season! ☺

*Rita Pelczar is a contributing editor for The American Gardener.*



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