

Giving Your Garden an Edge

by Rita Pelczar

A MANICURED EDGE goes a long way to making a landscape look well tended. In my garden, shallow trenches that I've cut between the garden beds and the adjacent lawn help keep grass from creeping into the beds and also create a small moat to prevent mulch in the beds from escaping into the lawn. A variety of tools can be used for both creating and maintaining the contours of edges. Here are some products I found especially helpful in my North Carolina garden.

While any straight-edged spade can be used as an edger, the **King of**

Spades Spade (model KS-S 13-inch), manufactured by W. W. Manufacturing Company of Bridgeton, New Jersey, is a solid choice with landscape professionals and home gardeners alike, especially for establishing an edge for a new bed. Constructed of durable, rust-resistant, aircraft-quality tubing, it measures 40 inches long, has a large, tubular "D" handle and a heavy-duty rubber footpad that provides a lot of stability (dual footpads are available). The flat blade's 13-inch cutting edge is tapered and sharp—useful for many jobs in addition to edging. Another tool from the same manufacturer

is the long-handled **Square Edger** (also sold as **Straight Edger**) that has a flat, square blade. It easily cuts a sharp, shallow trench, which makes maintaining an existing edge a breeze. Both tools are available from the American Garden Tool Company (www.AmericanGardenTools.com) and JNS Tools (www.jnstools.com).

The **Hand-Forged Step Edger** from White Flower Farm (www.whiteflowerfarm.com) features a sharp, half-moon, stainless steel blade that is fitted to a solid ash, 32-inch-long handle with a "T" grip to keep the blade positioned exactly where you want it. The top of the blade is equipped with stepping plates for your foot. Handcrafted by



Above: King of Spades Spade (model KS-S 13-inch). Right: Square or Straight Edger.



Hand-Forged Step Edger has a half-moon blade.

the Sneeboer Company of Holland, this beautiful, heavy-duty tool is built to last.

Trying to cut an edge through an area filled with roots? The **Root Slayer Edger** from Radius Garden (www.radiusgarden.com) makes the job easier. Featuring a saw-toothed, carbon steel blade and shaft, this edger weighs about four-and-a-half pounds—a little heavier than some, but that weight comes in handy when you hit a tough root. The V-notch in the blade guides and facilitates cutting while a flange at the top of the blade accommodates comfortable stepping. The handle is designed with a patented "O"-handle grip that reduces stress on your hands and wrists.

If you prefer a solid edge to your garden beds or walkways instead of a trench, one product that has a lot of merit is **Pound-In Edging** from Gardener's Supply Company (www.gardeners.com). Made of recycled polyethylene, it is an easy-to-install and relatively inexpensive option that provides a continuous solid edge with a



Root Slayer Edger features a notched blade.

minimal profile. Installed along the border of a pebbled path or mulched bed, it provides a tidy barrier that keeps pebbles and mulch from mingling with the lawn. Individual edging pieces lock together as you pound them into the ground with a rubber mallet, and they can be positioned to accommodate curved or straight lines. This edging is available in three heights:



Pound-In Edging can be installed with a mallet.

four, eight, and 12 inches; each set covers 20 feet of space.

Good grass shears help keep grass from growing over an edge and into your bed or walkway. **Fiskars Long-Handled Grass Shears with Swivel Head** from Gardener's Edge (www.gardenersedge.com) allow you to accomplish the task while standing. The sharp, precision-ground steel blades can be positioned to cut vertically or horizontally.



Fiskars Long-Handled Grass Shears with swivel Head is controlled by a hand lever.

They are attached to a 36-inch-long, lightweight aluminum shaft topped with an ergonomically-designed hand lever that controls the blades' cutting action.

Well-defined edges of beds and walkways make a big difference to your landscape's overall appearance. The above products minimize the hassle of creating and maintaining those edges while maximizing the results.

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