

The Modesto Bee

Garden Gadgets

Modern tools help make gardening easier, more enjoyable than ever before

By Donna Birch

Apr. 21--When a back injury sidelined avid gardener and Scenic Nursery employee April Sutis, the thing she missed most was being able to work with her plants.

When she had healed enough to work outdoors again, she worried how the rigors of gardening -- the bending, pulling, stretching and stooping -- would affect her back.

Then she learned about the Garden Kneeler.

Turned one way, the ergonomic gadget from **Yard Butler** is a handled kneeling pad that cushions the knees and protects clothing from grass and dirt stains. Flip it over and it's a sturdy bench that allows you to sit while you prune, deadhead or water.

Because the tool allowed her to pursue her favorite pastime with little discomfort to her back, she started to recommend it to shoppers.

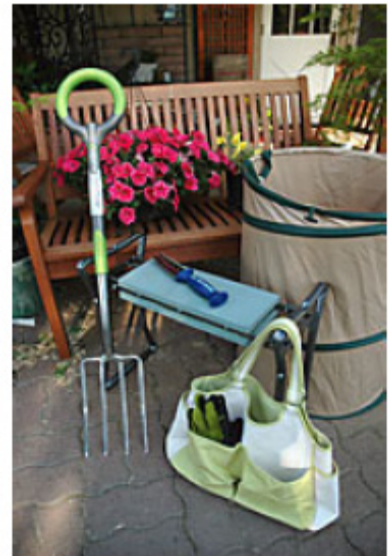
Spring is the prime time of year when gardeners head for the great outdoors to plot, plan and propagate their own little pieces of paradise. It's also the time of year when makers of gardening equipment unveil new products.

Venture into any nursery, hardware store or retail gardening center and the aisles are filled with an assortment of gadgets that claim to make gardening easier and/or more enjoyable.

For those looking to add to their collection of gizmos, The Bee queried staff at Scenic Nursery, as well as a few garden-tool makers, on some of their recommendations.

Respondents offered an assortment of products, including hand-held tools, wind chimes, totes and shoes. Prices vary depending upon the retailer.

Garden Kneeler, by **Yard Butler** (\$40-\$50) This is one of Sutis' favorites. In addition to its dual uses as a bench and kneeling pad, the Kneeler can be collapsed, making it easy to store.



Modern gardening tools and supplies -- like these found at Scenic Nursery in Modesto -- not only make gardening easier, but more fun, too. Among the products shown are a Radius Grip digging fork, the Garden Kneeler, by Yard Butler, and a Kangaroo Pop-up bag, by Fiskars.
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