

High Density Garden Tools

High density vegetable gardens – in addition to reducing the required space by a factor of 4 or more – produces less than ¼ of the weeds, need a fraction of the water, and the maintenance between the plants is greatly reduced. This all translates into far less maintenance for a given amount of food.

These gardeners are generally stuck with tools that don't fit. My steel garden rake is 15" wide with teeth spaced a little over an inch apart. Broad hoes designed for use with both hands from two or three feet away are dangerous among delicate seedlings spaced 3 to 6 inches apart, and conventional shovels and spading forks are out of the question. Also, consider the storage needs for these ungainly tools.

There are a few items available for container gardening and details of landscaping. These are often blunt instruments molded out of plastic, or a sheet metal trowel that bends when you use it.

We are in need a more specialized repertoire of tools.

I secured a long eyebolt (for a handle) to attach to a rectangle of sheet metal 3-1/2" wide. The width is selected to fit between seedlings 4" apart. One edge is left continuous for use as a hoe. I sharpened this edge, and it slides effortlessly through the ground at just below crown level. The other edge has a series of slits with the fringe elements twisted 90 degrees to form a small rake.



It would probably be too ugly to steal, so you could store it someplace in the garden (hung on a stake perhaps) so it wouldn't have to be retrieved or stored every time the garden inspiration struck.

Make a basket of 1/4" hardware cloth about 10" by 15" by 4 or 5 inches deep. This should be small enough to sit beside you among the stepping stones or narrow paths while tending the garden. It would be convenient for hauling weeds, thinnings, and trimmings to the compost pile, harvesting produce, and as a sieve for sorting out potting soil. If it's ugly enough, maybe you could store your hoe/rake in it.

I took a piece of angle iron and cut it to leave a sharp point, and then ground the edges sharp. When combined with a hammer, it is ideal for digging deep narrow holes.

I have also used it to sculpt hardened soil in areas where there is not enough room to swing a pick.

For a third function, you can remove stubborn tree sprouts or suckers of almost an inch in diameter by driving it down the sides to cut off their roots.

