



Tried & tested

we try before you buy



Garden tool belts

Make life easier by keeping implements close to hand. Consumer editor **Julia Heaton** buckles up to see which belt is best

HANDS UP if you've ever misplaced your secateurs or a hand fork, sometimes never to be seen again or, if you're lucky, reappearing in autumn in a rusted state. Quite often they end up in the compost heap, having been swept up with all the clippings.

Tool belts alleviate this problem (assuming you remember to put things back in the pockets after use) and prevent constant bending down to retrieve the item you need for whatever task is at hand.

Some people do find them a little restrictive, though, and you can buy tool bags that offer a similar function, or even smaller tool specific holders.

We tested five belts: some with lots of small pockets; others more like aprons with a couple of deep pockets. Your choice comes down to what you want to carry – a home for a mobile phone is handy, or somewhere to store your sandwiches, perhaps. Above all, you want something hardwearing with a good strong belt – which were both things we looked for in the test.

All prices correct at time of going to press and may vary at garden centres

Get knotted!

MINI KNOTTED ROPE PLANT HANGER £15

knottedinteriors.eleanorbolton.com



Now that the decade is in fashion once more, your plants will be bang on trend with a hanger that gives a contemporary twist to classic 1970s styling. Made from hard-wearing acrylic rope in a range of colours (including fluoro red, pictured), it can accommodate pots with base diameter of 1½in-2¼in (4-6cm) and height 1½in-3¼in (4-8cm).

Simply add your chosen container (not included) and attach the looped end to a ceiling hook. Larger sizes available.

Not just for sailors, rope makes a great decorative feature in the garden, too, as our three products demonstrate

ROPE BRIDGE £165

01253 205128 gardenbridge.co.uk



Add a touch of quirky fun by installing a curved wooden bridge with thick rope handrail. Suitable for foot traffic, it can be positioned on lawn or used to accessorise a pond. Bridges are made from pressure treated wood for year-round external use and come in Brown or Natural. Measures (L x W): 40in/100cm x 24in/60cm. Other sizes and customized options available.

GLASS TEA LIGHT HOLDER WITH ROPE HANDLE £3.95 + £3.95 P&P

01342 842599 livelaughlove.co.uk



Combines ridged glass with rope detailing for a nautical flavour. The functional but pretty design features a removable metal cradle for a standard tea light, and a metal and rope carrying handle. Suitable for use indoors or out. Measures (H x Dia): 4¼in/11cm x 3¼in/8cm.

GARDEN TOOL BELT

£14.99 + £4.95 P&P

Clas Ohlson
020 8247 9300
clasohlson.com

10/15



Features ★★★★★

Canvas bag measuring 14in (35cm) wide by 11in (28cm) high. Two open pockets, with smaller pouches stitched on front, plus a fifth pocket secured with a Velcro flap. The belt is held on by loops and has a metal clasp.

Performance ★★★★★

The softness of the canvas meant the bag sat nicely, but I worried about it being pierced by sharp edges. The fastening pocket was good for secateurs; however the belt isn't the longest and is snug when you reach waist sizes of 38in.

Value ★★★★★

Very nice looking, with good storage options. How it will stand up to regular usage remains to be seen, though.

GARDEN TOOL BELT

£36.99 + £2.99 P&P

Haws
0330 333 4220
gettingpersonal.co.uk

12/15



Features ★★★★★

Pink suede design with two pockets, one (7in/18cm) slightly wider than the other (6in/15cm). Measures 15in (38cm) wide by 11½in high. The belt is slim with a small plastic buckle, and is stitched into the apron band.

Performance ★★★★★

Similar in size and shape to the Connell belt, but the softer material makes it more lightweight and means it can be folded down or rolled up when not in use. The pockets hold plenty and are strongly secured, and it did not restrict movement while gardening.

Value ★★★★★

With its pink suede and floral fabric, this is aimed at women, and is priced higher than bags with a more utilitarian feel.

GARDEN TOOL BELT

£6.99 + £3.49 P&P

Esscher's Garden from Fallen Fruits
01258 837970
selections.com

12/15



Features ★★★★★

Very strong canvas apron measuring approx 14in (35cm) square. With one pocket at the back that is the width of the bag, plus two smaller pockets and four 'loops' for storing pens or sharpeners at the front.

Performance ★★★★★

Items in the rear pocket feel very safe and won't fall out, but the smallest pocket is a little tight to use and the 'loops' largely redundant. The belt is wide and nicely padded, but the apron is stiff and does not move with you.

Value ★★★★★

An incredible price for such a robust item. Not as nice to wear as the more expensive products, but perfectly adequate for occasional use.

N543 4 POCKET TOOL POUCH

£9.99 + £3.30 P&P

Bosmere
01293 586200 for stockists
amazon.co.uk

12/15



Features ★★★★★

Compact pouch made from polyester, measuring 9in (23cm) wide by 10in (25cm) high. One large pocket with three smaller ones (all equal-sized) in front, plus a pair of loops and an eyelet for feeding through twine or string.

Performance ★★★★★

Smaller than the others, which does limit what you can carry, but also makes it very unobtrusive. The line feed for twine is a great touch, but the plastic clasp on the buckle is huge, and will pinch your skin if you aren't careful.

Value ★★★★★

The webbing on the belt and loops started to fray after just a few uses, but the pouch itself seems hard-wearing and good for the price.

PERSONALISED GARDENING TOOL BELT £23.99 + £4.50 P&P

Connell of Sheffield
0114 251 3535
buybrandtools.com

Features ★★★★★

Large suede apron measuring 14.5in (37cm) wide by 10in (26cm) high. Two equal-sized pockets 7in (17cm) deep, along with two front pouches for secateurs, labels and pencils. The pockets and belt are stitched and reinforced with studs. The belt has a plastic buckle and there is a keyring loop.

Performance ★★★★★

The best of both worlds: the two large pockets accommodate lots of bits and there are smaller, tighter-fitting pouches for shears. It feels very comfortable and moulds easily to your body. The placement of the belt buckle, right next to the top of the apron, was handy and made it stronger, while being able to attach the shed keys was a useful extra.

Value ★★★★★

Extremely well made, hard-wearing and attractive – the white stitching against brown suede looks great. Also included in the price is the option to have a name added to the belt for a personal touch.



BEST BUY

14/15