

## Gifts for the Gardener in Your House

### AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

For most people gardening is an activity that falls somewhere between a hobby and a passion. Therefore, buying presents for the holiday season can be somewhere between challenging and a mine field. So for that gardener that might be anywhere between a beginner and a zealot, here's some basic ideas and some considerations to keep in mind.

The more of a beginner that your gift gardener is the easier it may be to buy for them. While not necessarily exciting, go straight to the gardener and ask for a wish list. Be sure to ask them to be very specific as well. If all else fails, find out their favorite nursery or online store and get them a gift card. I know it sounds rather impersonal but the more into their gardening they are, the safer it will be. Now that we have the safe and easy approach out of the way, let's move on to some real gifts!

Tools are a natural gift for gardeners. We use a lot of different tools in the yard and garden and there are lots of options out there. But also realize that gardeners are very particular in what they want and you may want to visit with them before you go to crazy. I've always been a firm believer in buying quality tools and taking good care of them. My hand pruners are 35 years old and work like a charm still. I use them a lot! Keep in mind though that these are not the gardening tools that you will find at the big box stores. If I were to replace them today they'd cost me \$50! Good tools are a pleasure to use and even make strenuous yard and garden tasks go a little bit easier. If you need a source of high end garden tools, give me a call.

Reading materials, whether they are magazines or books, are often desirable for gardeners. There are many high end and practical periodicals available for the gardener on your list. Some are more fluff than substance but again, I can help sort through the chaff for the grain on these. In spite of the movement towards eBooks there are still a lot of very good books out there especially about very specific facets of gardening. Want to know more about growing garlic? I've got a couple of good recommendations for you. There's general books about gardening, there's books about composting, growing fruit trees, you just name it and there's a book out there about it. If you aren't sure, just enter "gardening books" in your preferred internet search engine and see what comes up! But I do have several copies of an excellent book on garlic growing for sale here at the Extension Office!

Something that many gardeners are starting or considering starting is beekeeping. Beekeeping is a fascinating hobby that I used to do and will do again. It's kind of pricey to get started in and I'd recommend starting with a good book about it, or for basic information I'd be happy to talk with you. It used to be challenging to find equipment suppliers but that has gotten easier in recent years with local stores carrying equipment.

Lastly, and a personal favorite of mine, is weather equipment. In the past twenty years there have been some great advancements in weather instrument technology. You can go as simple as a very good all weather rain gauge for under \$40 to a digital weather station for \$300 and up. If your gardener is as big a weather fan, as I am, then one of these weather stations, a good weather station, is a serious consideration.

So there's a quick list. If you have something in mind and want to know if it's out in left field, give me a call. Or if you are just totally without an idea, give me a call and we can discuss options that may be available for your gardener!