

in the garden

BY STEPHEN AND KRISTIN PATEGAS

Don't Lose These Tools!



Kristin and Stephen Pategas

It was gone. Missing from the sheath on his hip, Stephen's second-most favorite tool was AWOL. Armed with a poor substitute for the soil knife the gardening day continued but it wasn't quite as efficient or satisfying. Each day in the garden requires tackling the same tasks as well as accomplishing new ones. Over time a stable of dependable tools that do their jobs just right become favorites and are kept close at hand. These are the ones we find indispensable.

• The Soil Knife and Sheath (4752 & 4750S) is a must for digging, weeding, prying, cutting, and survival. Make sure you get the sheath otherwise there'll be a serious hole in your

pocket (800-543-8955/ www.amleo.com).



Cactuspruner.com tools on top step. L to R in bag: Transplant Knife, Root Saw, and Cooling Bandanas

• Thin as a whisker and serrated to boot, the Transplant Knife (BL118) separates the plant from the pot and slices n' dices the root ball when we want more than one (800.871.8158/ www.leevalley.com).

• We extend our summer gardening sessions by hours with our reusable Cooling Bandanas on our brows or around our necks. Just soak them in water then toss in the fridge for ex-

tra chill power and benefit from the evaporative cooling. We find them locally at Miller's Hardware (407-647-3316) and Palmer's Garden & Goods (407-896-5951).



L to R on ground: Soil Knife, Felco #2 and #7

• Getting down in the dirt to cut roots is a major chore unless we have the Corona Root Saw (4060). Just stay away from gas and electrical lines and your fingers (937-773-2694/ www.gardenersedge.com).

• The most used tools at Hortus Oasis are our Felco hand pruners. Kristin uses model #2 and Stephen uses model #7 with the rotating handle that fits a larger hand and reduces wrist stress (937-773-2694/ www.gardenersedge.com). With hundreds of pruning cuts a day, a Felco pruning shear is the best investment. See all of the models at www.felco.com.

• Gloves on, gloves off, where in the heck did they go? We clip 'em onto Glove Guards (XW106 a pair) which clip onto belt loops or belts. Now we can't blame our memories (800.871.8158/ www.leevalley.com).

• Our spiny agaves, succulents, and cactus are not easy to handle, trim, and weed around. This selection of tools: saw, whacker, gripper, hemostats, and super looong tweezers keep us spine-free until we back into one (303.232.8788/ www.cactuspruner.com). Locally Skycraft (407-628-5634) carries hemostats at a great price.

• Stephen carries many of these tools along with his cell phone on a leather tool belt and Kristin uses a pouch that clips onto her waistband (both from Home Depot).

• The tools and gadgets that don't travel on our waists will corral in the handled Garden Tote (XH550). Organize them and make them portable (800.871.8158/ www.leevalley.com).

It was only a week before Stephen had ordered a new soil knife. When it arrived...lo and behold the new improved model was even better than the previous version. Maybe losing a favorite tool isn't the worst thing that can happen to a gardener. 🌱

Kristin and Stephen Pategas design landscapes and garden at their home and business Hortus Oasis in Winter Park. Contact them at garden@hortus oasis.com and visit www.hortus oasis.com and www.pategaionplants.com. All photography by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis