

HOUSE & GARDEN

10 GREAT IDEAS FOR GARDEN RETREATS

domestic bliss

TOOLBOX BASICS

When you reach for a butter knife to tighten a knob, you know it's time you need a screwdriver. Not the cocktail, but the hand tool, which comes in a baffling array of sizes and shapes. This is how the essential home tool kit begins. Pesky problems, too minor for calling in a pro, start you shopping at hardware stores. The dining room curtains look lopsided, so you pick up a tape measure and a level. A porch step wobbles, so you buy a hammer and nails. Your new bookcase arrives unassembled; pliers are a must. As your collection grows, so does your confidence. Why not add extra shelves to the bedroom closet? How about shoe racks and storage nooks? You acquire a handsaw, a cordless drill, and an attitude. Never again will you have to use the sawn-off for household repairs. Then, one day while you are unclogging the kitchen drain, you notice something wondrous about your adjustable wrench. Solid and unassuming, it is likely to last as long as the family silver. You imagine a future generation of antiques collectors displaying your plumbing tools over their mantel. Far-fetched? Maybe, but it's easy to become passionate about tools for their craftsmanship and their styling. In times of crisis, even the most mundane win a place in your heart. When company's coming and the toilet overflows, what could be more treasured than a plunger?

1 Leviton 25-foot extension cord, \$3.77, Home Depot. 800-430-3376. 2 Stanley long-nose, \$9.99, and slip-joint, \$7.99, pliers, Gracious Home NYC, 242-291-7900. 3 Lutz 15-in-1 screwdriver, \$15.95, Garrett Wade. 4 Hardpoint Toolbox 15 1/2-inch handsaw, \$11.95, Garrett Wade. 5 Stanley utility knife, \$5.97, Home Depot. 6 Stiletto 10-ounce titanium-finish hammer, \$69.95, Garrett Wade. 7 Crescent 8-inch adjustable wrench, \$12.47, Home Depot. 8 Energizer rubber flashlight, \$7.99, Gracious Home. 9 Stanley 25-foot tape measure, \$13.99, Gracious Home. 10 Colored duct tape, \$3.49 for a 10-yard roll, Gracious Home. 11 Johnson 9-inch level, \$7.97, Home Depot.

