Tools and equipment

The basics

A trug or a bucket

Something to put your bits and pieces in so you can carry stuff around the garden and take waste to the bin. If it holds water you can use it to soak plant pots, or even to carry water around garden instead of a watering can.

A watering can

Or even two. One that you can just about carry when its full, fitted with a rose, and a little one that you can lift easily without spilling.

A trowel

I prefer, these days, my heart shaped trowel, since the pointy bit dislodges stones a bit like a garden fork. But any shape that fits comfortably in your hand will do.

A spade

I recently acquired a new border spade (a smaller version of the more workmanlike garden spade) with a little flat bit onto which I balance when I need to get into the tough ground or through a tough tree root. Border spades are easier to use if you are short, or not particularly mobile

Secateurs

For pruning, dead heading and even cutting string or wire. Go for ones that fit in your hand otherwise they will be painful to use for any length of time. If you are left handed, consider getting a set of left handed secateurs (Felco make some, very expensive but very good I hear).

A bread knife

Honestly, kid you not. A cheap, serated edge bread knife for cutting through tough roots, dividing root balls etc. Keep it in the shed, though.

A scoop

Something to scoop compost, soil, sand, grit, coir, chicken manure pellets. I have a number of kids sand toys that also work quite well for different jobs around the garden, and several cut down plastic cartons. Washing liquid cartons seem to be quite robust.

Long handled loppers

You will only needs these if you have a mature garden with lots of big shrubs. If you can afford them, ones with a ratchet or articulated action can help you get through the tough stuff.

A lawn mower

Or a man who brings his own. Nuff said.