



THE PITCHFORK

A pitchfork is an agricultural tool with a long handle and long, thick, widely separated pointed tines. Pitchforks are used to handle materials such as hay, straw and manure. Pitchforks typically have only two, three or four tines, while dung forks generally have four or five. Tines can be straight or slightly curved. Tines are generally thick so they can withstand heavy use. The handle of a pitchfork is usually very long, thus giving the user greater leverage in lifting and pitching hay and straw.

The pitchfork is a very old tool. It appears to have its origins in the Middle Ages. The word, “pitchfork,” is derived from the Middle English word, *pichen*, which means “to throw.” Because it was a very popular tool among farmers, it became associated almost exclusively with farming and field labor.

Early pitchforks were made entirely of wood, and usually as one piece. Modern pitchforks have detachable wooden handles and metal tines.