

The gift of giving plants by Jenny Mandt, Owner, Garden Coaching Solutions

“A wonderful gift may not be wrapped as you would expect.” – Jonathan Lockwood Huie

This is the time of year to be gearing up to give gifts to each other. If you are looking for something different to give, plants and gardening tools are a great gift to give whether it is for the holidays, a birthday, memorial of someone's life, housewarming or just because. Gardening tools, houseplants, herbs, small trees and shrubs can be a great way to show your love to someone because they last long after a bouquet of flowers has died. Maybe you are like my husband who waits until the last minute to come up with a gift or you struggle with what to get someone who has everything. Below are some gift ideas for the new to experienced gardener.

Many of my gardening friends who use these tools in their gardens on a regular basis swear they last for years. The Hori Hori knife comes in handy for digging small holes to sawing small roots, even sod. This summer I weeded out one of my flower beds and my friend helped me. She brought along this amazing Japanese weeding tool which has a sharp flat side and a point at the end. The flat edge can really get deep under the surface of the ground and cuts roots (especially crabgrass!). The pointed end can dig deep down into the soil as well and get to those roots. If you know someone who is learning or likes to prune, the folding pruning saw doesn't take up too much space and can saw through most any branch 1" to 4" diameter. In this climate, waterproof gardening gloves are a must for the avid gardener. They are sturdier than lighter weight gloves but you still have good dexterity and can work in the garden longer because your hands don't get as dirty or cold. A great gift to save a friend's knees is a foam kneeling pad. Any of these gardening tools are sure to please.

For those who have a small condo or apartment, a houseplant might be just the thing for them. Here are four easy to grow plants that take moderate indirect sunlight. The ZZ plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia* (it is poisonous to dogs), the Snake plant, Peace lily (filters the air but is poisonous to dogs and cats), and air plants. If you need a plant that can take a lot of sun, the aloe plant or jade plant can be good options as well. Both require very little water and tending. If you have a foodie family member or friend, why not give them some herbs or seeds to grow their own? If they have a sunny south facing window, herbs can be grown at any time of year and can be used in their culinary masterpieces.

I especially like giving shrubs and trees as gifts (I planted a variegated Redtwig Dogwood in my backyard in memory of my friend Donna). Depending on the sunlight in someones garden and how experienced they are as a gardener a hydrangea, rose bush, dwarf conifer, or japanese maple can make wonderful gifts. Whereas hydrangeas and japanese maple trees generally prefer a bit of shade from the hot afternoon sun, roses and dwarf conifers can handle the heat.

If you can't decide what to give someone, how about a gift certificate for garden coaching? This can be especially helpful for the first time homebuyer who wants to know what they have in their garden and how to take care of it all. The experienced gardener may have every tool but might like an objective eye to help them with an area in their garden that they want to change. If this sounds like something you would like to purchase, you can contact me at (206) 915-0585 or email me at gardencoachingsolutions@gmail.com and I can make arrangements with you to get the gift certificate(s) to you. I wish you and your garden the gift of good health, long life and a wonderful Holiday season!

