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Gardeners can dig thoughtful presents placed under a tree

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By Julie R. Bailey THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Although the gardener on your holiday list might enjoy a bag of mulch or a pack of seeds, those don't make the most interesting gifts in the world.

The grower may wish for something to decorate the garden or something to help keep her skin in good shape.

We offer some suggestions, from the practical to the whimsical.

ROUGH TALK

• Burt's Bee's Remedy Kit (\$9.99): This travel-size kit, formerly known as the Gardener's Kit, is packed with sample-size products made with natural ingredients. Kits may contain hand salve, insect



A George Carruth Nativity star hanging on a wreath

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lotion, poison-ivy soap, lavender-mint toothpaste and a full-size tube of lip balm; products in the kits vary. Products are formulated to help relieve wounds, cuts, burns and bruises. (grocery stores, specialty markets, www.burtsbees.com)

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Urban Gardener’s skin - care products

(\$3.63 to \$15.73): Along with selling plants, supplies and accessories, the Urban Gardener — a Short North garden boutique — carries its own line of skin-care products ranging from lip balms to body creams. Fragrances include the unusual olive-dandelion and the more traditional lavender. (Urban Gardener, 614-299-4769)

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Crabtree & Evelyn’s Gardeners 60- Second Fix Kit

(\$25): After toiling in the dirt for hours, your gift recipient is promised relief from dry or chapped hands in 60 seconds. The two-step process starts with a cleaning and exfoliating scrub, followed with a moisturizer with shea butter and glycerin (Crabtree & Evelyn stores, www.crabtree-evelyn.com or call 1-800-272-2873)

BACKYARD BEAUTIES

• **George Carruth’s stone - cast gar den statues** (prices vary): These whimsical and touching garden-art sculptures are intended for the outdoors but also can be used inside the home. This year’s Christmas sculptures include snowflakes, angels and Nativity scenes. (Garden Smiles by Carruth, 614-847-3660 or www.caruthstudios.com)



Felco pruner No. 6, designed for a narrower grip



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- **Sleeping garden cat** (\$69): Large as life, this concrete feline will relax in the garden or on the front porch. Indoors, this slumbering kitty can snuggle on any hearth or doorway. (Smith & Hawken, 1-800-776-3336, www.smithandhawken.com)

- **St. Francis Garden Sculpture** (\$52.50): Honored for his love of nature, Francis of Assisi was known to buy birds from the market just to set them free. This free-standing figure, 16 inches tall, can be placed outside or mounted on the wall inside. (Washington National Museum Cathedral Museum Store, commerce.cathedral.org)

COOL TOOLS

- **Felco pruner No. 6** (\$44) : Those with small hands (and that means a lot of women) will appreciate this pruner, designed to fit a narrower grip. This particular tool is good for pruning grapevines, shrubs and young trees. Felco also makes other styles of pruners for those with various needs, including the left-handed gardener. (garden centers)

- **Gardener's Essential Tool Kit** (\$100): This set has everything in it but the kitchen sink — 17 aluminum ergonomic tools, a bubblegel knee pad, a six-piece hose connector set, a three-piece pruner set and two spray nozzles. All the items fit into a plastic storage tote for easy carrying. (Brookstone stores, www.brookstone.com)

- **The Flasket** (\$24.95): A tisket, a tasket — try toting flowers from your garden to table with this basket. The 18-inch-long plastic and wood carrier converts from basket to display vase in a snap. Fill it with water and stand it up, filling it with flowers as you snip. Then flip the handle for nospill carrying. You then can use it as a cornucopia or an upright vase. (Maine Garden Products, 1-877-764-9365)

LIVING THINGS

- **Flowers of the month** (prices vary): Let your honey savor fragrances and flowers throughout the year with this gift that comes in a variety of forms and colors. These flowering plants can be sent for three months (\$109), six months (\$199) or a year (\$359). Each subscription is announced with the arrival of a cachepot about a month ahead of the first flower delivery. The three-month plan includes an orchid for January; lily of the valley for February; and spring bulbs for March. (Smith&Hawken, catalog orders only, 1-800-776-3336 or www.smithandhawken.com)

- **Luck Garden Growing Kit** (\$18): Give a bit of luck with this kit, which comes with its own white clover seeds. (RedEnvelope, 1-877-473-3249 or www.redenvelope.com)

- **Potted amaryllis** (\$16-\$20): With its dramatic blooms, this plant is typically sold at the holiday season. The botanical name is Hippeastrum, which means horse star, a reference to the massive six-pointed blooms, which can reach 8 to 10 inches in diameter. (DeMoynes Greenhouse, 614-252-6046 and other nurseries)

NOVEL IDEAS

- **Amazing Message Plant** (\$9.95): Forget about sending a message in a bottle; try giving one on a plant. This greeting card and plant will get your message across in a creative way. For your message to appear, open the can with the seed inside and place it in a sunny area. Once the seed germinates, the "I (heart) you" will appear on the pod and will last for about a month. The plant should live about six months. (Miracle Products, www.message-plant.com)

- **OSU Birdhouse** (\$27.95): School spirit has gone to the birds with this Ohio State Buckeye birdhouse. This small house stands 10½ inches tall with a 1¼-inch opening. (Conrads College Gifts, www.conrads.com)

- **Cattail sculpture bird feeder** (\$19.95): This four-season garden sculpture and birdfeeder attracts clinging birds such as nuthatches and chickadees. This feeder plants easily in the ground with its pointed stakes. Sold individually, the feeder looks great in multiples. (Gardener's Supply Co., 1-888-833-1412 or www.gardeners.com)

jbailey@dispatch.com

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