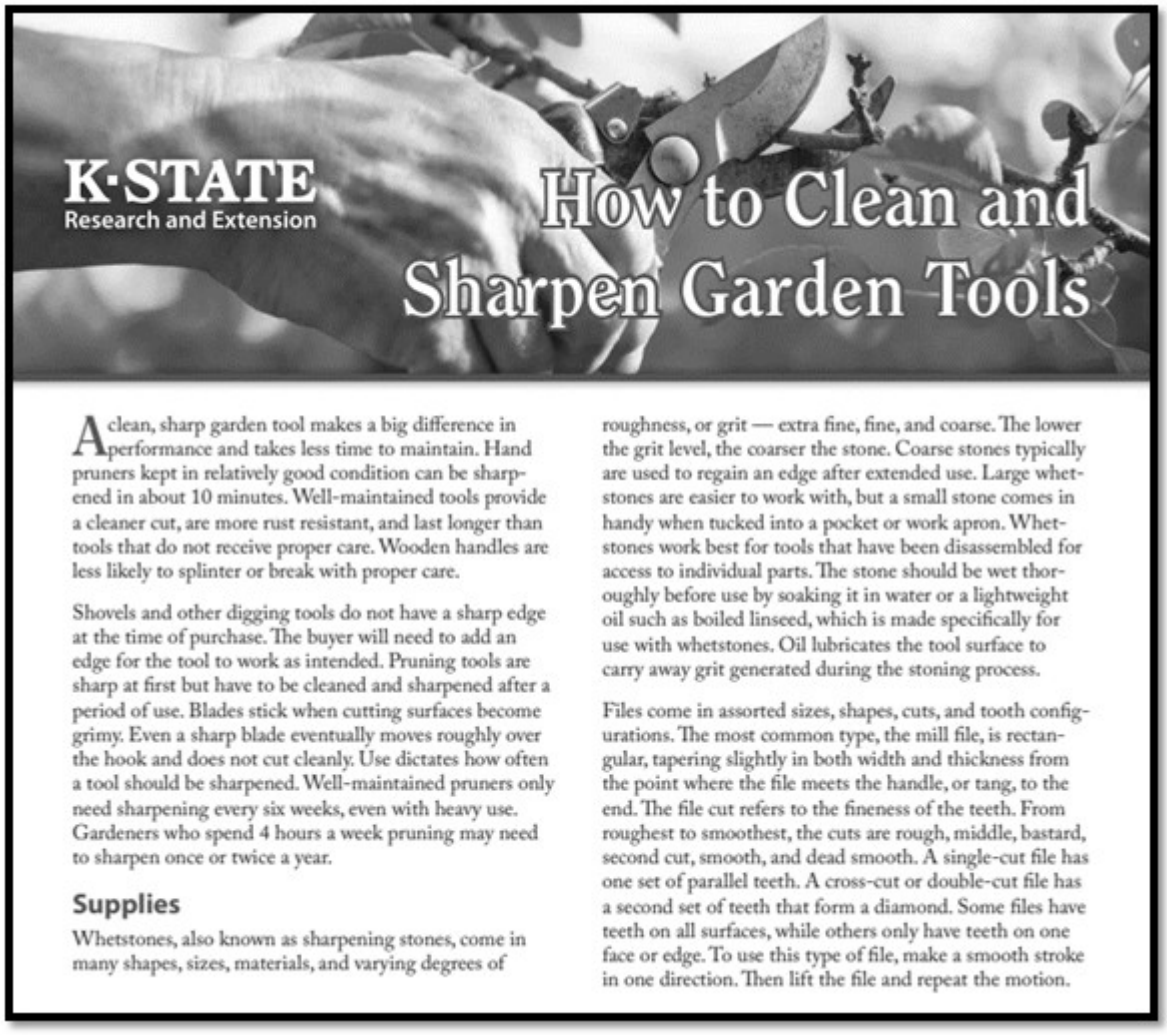
Blade Sharpening – Landscaping Infographic





K·STATE
Research and Extension

How to Clean and Sharpen Garden Tools

A clean, sharp garden tool makes a big difference in performance and takes less time to maintain. Hand pruners kept in relatively good condition can be sharpened in about 10 minutes. Well-maintained tools provide a cleaner cut, are more rust resistant, and last longer than tools that do not receive proper care. Wooden handles are less likely to splinter or break with proper care.

Shovels and other digging tools do not have a sharp edge at the time of purchase. The buyer will need to add an edge for the tool to work as intended. Pruning tools are sharp at first but have to be cleaned and sharpened after a period of use. Blades stick when cutting surfaces become grimy. Even a sharp blade eventually moves roughly over the hook and does not cut cleanly. Use dictates how often a tool should be sharpened. Well-maintained pruners only need sharpening every six weeks, even with heavy use. Gardeners who spend 4 hours a week pruning may need to sharpen once or twice a year.

Supplies

Whetstones, also known as sharpening stones, come in many shapes, sizes, materials, and varying degrees of roughness, or grit — extra fine, fine, and coarse. The lower the grit level, the coarser the stone. Coarse stones typically are used to regain an edge after extended use. Large whetstones are easier to work with, but a small stone comes in handy when tucked into a pocket or work apron. Whetstones work best for tools that have been disassembled for access to individual parts. The stone should be wet thoroughly before use by soaking it in water or a lightweight oil such as boiled linseed, which is made specifically for use with whetstones. Oil lubricates the tool surface to carry away grit generated during the stoning process.

Files come in assorted sizes, shapes, cuts, and tooth configurations. The most common type, the mill file, is rectangular, tapering slightly in both width and thickness from the point where the file meets the handle, or tang, to the end. The file cut refers to the fineness of the teeth. From roughest to smoothest, the cuts are rough, middle, bastard, second cut, smooth, and dead smooth. A single-cut file has one set of parallel teeth. A cross-cut or double-cut file has a second set of teeth that form a diamond. Some files have teeth on all surfaces, while others only have teeth on one face or edge. To use this type of file, make a smooth stroke in one direction. Then lift the file and repeat the motion.

Source: *https://www.shawnee.k*