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Felco Pruners Reviewed

By James Curran

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The following is an article written by Robert B. Martin, Jr. of Pasadena, California. Robert wrote this article for the Rose Parade Newsletter. Robert is also Editor of the American Rose Society Quarterly Rose Exhibitors' Forum.

"Of all of the tools of the Rosarian the most important are pruning shears. The purchase of pruning shears is not a place to cut corners or attempt to save money. Good pruning shears can last nearly a lifetime and viewed in terms of their years of use, they are quite inexpensive. They also make a nice Christmas gift for your favorite Rosarian.

Although there are other pruning shears of value on the market, a survey of Rosarians will reveal that by far the most preferred pruning shears are those manufactured by Felco. Felco is a Swiss Company that has set the standard for professional pruning shears for more than forty years. Their line of shears is, however, so extensive that considerable confusion exists as to the differences between each model. The purpose of this article is to set forth in detail the entire line of Felco pruning shears and related products.

Pruners

Felco #2 Pruner: The Felco 2 is usually called the "original" there being no explanation I have uncovered of why there is no Felco 1. They have a replaceable, precision ground forged cutting blade, with sap groove and soft wire cutter. The handles are a tough forged alloy, which are easy to grip; rubber shock absorbers between the handles cushion the impact of cutting. When not in use the handles are held closed by a locking mechanism on a pivot bolt. The pruners are 8 1/2" in overall length and sell for \$30.00 and up.

Felco #4 Pruner: The Felco 4 is often called the "basic pruner" and is basically a stripped down Felco 2 without the locking mechanism or shock absorbers. The pruners retail for \$26.00; the small cost

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savings is clearly not worth the difference in features. A more economical stripped down model is the Felco 5 described below. These economy pruners are obviously designed for large scale operators and make little sense for a serious Rosarian.

Felco #5 Pruner: The Felco 5 is the down-scale pruner in the line containing little more than the replaceable cutting blades. They are 9" in overall length and retail at the "bargain" price of \$19.50 and up.

Felco #6 Pruner: The Felco 6 is a smaller scale pruner with shorter blades which is good for those with smaller hands; they also allow more precision pruning of miniature roses. The pruners are 8" in overall length and sell for \$30.00 and up.

Felco #7 Pruner: The Felco 7 is the top of the line shears with all the features one can imagine. The blade design is angled for close pruning; there is also a sap groove and a wire-cutting notch. The

handles have an ergonomic design with little curves that fit well in the hand. Of particular interest is a rotating lower handle that is said to allow fingers to move naturally, reducing hand fatigue and the chance of blisters during prolonged pruning. Personally I find the action of the rotating angle to be odd and recommend that the buyers actually test the shears in their own hands before pruning. The pruners are 8 1/2" in overall length and sell for \$42.00 and up.

Felco #8 Pruner: The Felco 8 is the same as the Felco 7 without the rotating handle. These are my pruners of choice, as I do not like the feel of the rotating handle and am also suspicious of additional moving parts. But I do like the ergonomic design of the handles and believe this pruner which sells for \$33.00 and up is well worth the slight increase in price over the original Felco 2.

Felco #9 Pruner: The Felco 9 is the same as the Felco 8 with reversed blade, anvil and locking catch for left-handers. They sell for \$30.00 and up.

Felco #10 Pruner: The Felco 10 is the same as the Felco 7 reversed for left handers, complete with rotating handle. They sell for \$42.00 and up.

Felco #11 Pruner: The Felco 11 is similar to the original Felco 2, with a more narrow, pointed anvil blade for extra close cutting. It has an ergonomic handle design, is 8 1/4" in overall length and sell for \$32.00 and up.

Felco #12 Pruner: The Felco 12 is a compact pruner like the Felco 6, designed for small hands, with the rotating handles. It is 7 1/4" in overall length and sells for \$42.00 and up.

Felco #13 Pruner: Introduced in 1996 the Felco 13 features extra long handles to give better leverage and for two hand use on heavy branches. It is 13 1/2" in overall length and sells for \$38.00 and up.

Felco #30 Pruner: The Felco 30 are anvil shears that I cannot recommended for roses. They are 8 1/2" in overall length and sell for \$29.00 and up.

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One of the best things about owning Felco pruners is the wide availability of replacement parts which can be used to extend the life of the shears. These include the following at approximate prices:

Cut Blade: \$9.95
Hook Blade: \$9.95
Pivot Bolt & Nut: \$7.60
Spring Pack: \$3.25
Repair Parts: (All parts not listed above)\$5.45

"Although some local nurseries carry Felco pruning shears it is rare to find a wide selection and sometimes you have to ask since they are kept under the counter. There are many places to purchase Felco's in catalogs and a few online locations but one of the most complete and perhaps the best pricing I have found is at Frostproof Growers Supply. They can be purchased online at their website which is:

or you can call them at 800-635-3621."

Editor of the American Rose Society Quarterly Rose Exhibitors' Forum

Do You Have All Of Your Garden Supplies?

By George Johnson

The garden season is close to beginning. If you have made a list it's a good start. Here are some kid friendly garden supplies that should be on every kid gardener's list.

Garden pruners are like scissors. They are needed to cut branches back and even harvest fruit and produce. There are different sizes from the smallest to larger branch pruners often called shears.

A sturdy strong set of garden pruners is best. You also might want to consider the grip. Have the kids check out the grip before buying to make sure it fits their hands.

A garden rake is a great clean up tool. It can also be great for sifting out rocks in a freshly tilled garden bed.

Not all garden rakes are created alike. You have to find one you like and one that you can grip and use. There are several different types of rakes.

There is a stiff rake, the kind used mostly in the garden. This usually has a horizontal set of teeth that aren't retractable and flexible. This makes them strong and gives them the ability to be used to scrape the surface of the garden bed to remove rocks and other debris.

A lawn and leaf rake is usually a flexible rake that can be retractable. It is used mainly for cleaning up leaves in the fall.

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Sometimes called a shovel, this little dandy of an item makes a child's gardening experience a little easier. It has a versatile use. It can be used in almost every phase of the garden from transplanting to weeding to harvest time.

A good pair of garden gloves is good for those tough to tackle jobs such as rose handling, thorn bush picking and other jobs that could require covering up the hands in some sort of protection. Certain plants give off chemicals that could be irritating to the skin. These could include, but isn't limited to, the nightshade family (tomatoes, peppers and potatoes), onions and some herbs. Wearing garden gloves can help protect a child from these irritations.

While some home and garden stores may carry kid sized gloves more likely they only have adult size. But luckily the women's garden gloves are more likely to carry a smaller size and possibly neutral colors if necessary. Find gloves that fit snugly but do not constrict movement too much. You want the hand to be able to move freely and breath correctly.

You can't have a garden with the plants, right? You can't have plants without seeds. Sure, you can buy plants already to transplant. But starting with seeds can be more rewarding and cost efficient. So buy a few seeds and start the garden today.

The right soil make the difference between a mediocre garden harvest and a great harvest. There are many types of soil including germinating mixes to start seeds to top soil. Choosing the right soil can be daunting. Just read the instructions on each type to see what is best for your garden.

While a garden journal isn't an absolute necessity it can help the kid gardener in future gardening endeavors. A child can put down his or her thoughts on the garden, experiences and even make the garden supply list in the journal. You can either make the garden journal or buy it. Regardless of where you obtain the garden journal it's a must for long term kid gardeners.

Get your list ready before you go and buy your garden supplies.

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