

# Gardening Hand Care

There aren't many downsides to the care and cultivation of your garden, except the toll it can take on your hands. Naturally, they'll be dirty, but extended time spent handling soil fertilizers or weeds can also sap your skin of emollients and moisture, and expose you to any number of irritants-including poison ivy. Most skin problems can be addressed, however, with a simple regimen of soap and moisturizer.

Finding a good antibacterial soap is the first step. Try one with a vegetable base, such as Crabtree & Evelyn gardener's soap, which contains pumice to help get your hands especially clean and glycerin to smooth and soften your skin. A small, natural-bristle brush is perfect for getting dirt out from under your fingernails; look for one whose bristles are soft but firm. Hand creams, including those with vitamin E, can invigorate your skin and help maintain its good health (Martha prefers Mario Badescu vitamin-E hand cream, which also contains wheat-germ oil and honey extract). Very rough skin can be rescued with bag balm; it was originally developed to keep cow udders from chafing, but it works nicely on chapped or irritated skin.

If you do come in contact with poison ivy or poison oak, wash any exposed areas, and apply a lotion, such as Tecnu poison-ivy preventative, which removes plant oils from the skin and is effective even after a rash appears. Another way to protect your hands while pruning and planting is to wear gardening gloves. Learn which material-whether cotton, latex, or suede-best suits your needs.

## Sources:

Bag balm

Altesse nail brush

Available at local drugstores

Tecnu poison-ivy preventative

800-482-4464 (800-ITCHING) for local retailers

Mario Badescu vitamin-E hand cream

Mario Badescu

800-223-3728

[www.mariobadescu.com](http://www.mariobadescu.com)

Crabtree & Evelyn gardener's soap

Crabtree & Evelyn

800 272-2873

[www.crabtree-evelyn.com](http://www.crabtree-evelyn.com)

# Gardening Gloves

For every task in the garden, there is a gardening glove to assist. Cotton gloves are good for many ordinary garden chores, especially planting and light weeding. Some come reinforced with a vinyl and PVC (polyvinyl chloride) coating on the palms and fingers, affording a better grip on tools; others have ribbed cuffs that provide a snug fit and help keep dirt out. Cotton gloves are easy to care for—just machine wash in cold water.

Rugged suede gloves are more durable than cotton and will last for about two to three years. They're good for heavier tasks such as soil preparation, digging and raking, or using power equipment. Goatskin gloves—the most comfortable kind of leather gloves—are also appropriate for heavier tasks and should be used for pruning, caring for roses, and hedge trimming. The goatskin and guard cuffs will protect your hands from thorns and branches.

To protect her skin from potentially abrasive substances when fertilizing, Martha uses latex gloves. Disposable latex gloves will protect your hands from chemicals, pests, and disease-ridden plants. Carry a plastic bag full of them in your gardening bag, so you're always prepared.

Clip each pair of non-disposable garden gloves together with a clothespin, and you'll have no problem locating them when they're needed.

## Sources:

Vinyl-reinforced cotton jersey gloves

Rugged suede leather gloves

Thorn-resistant goatskin gloves with guard cuffs

Kmart

800-866-0086

[www.kmart.com](http://www.kmart.com)

Latex/surgical gloves

Available in drugstores and medical-supply stores.