

Tool Lending Libraries- The SE Como Experience

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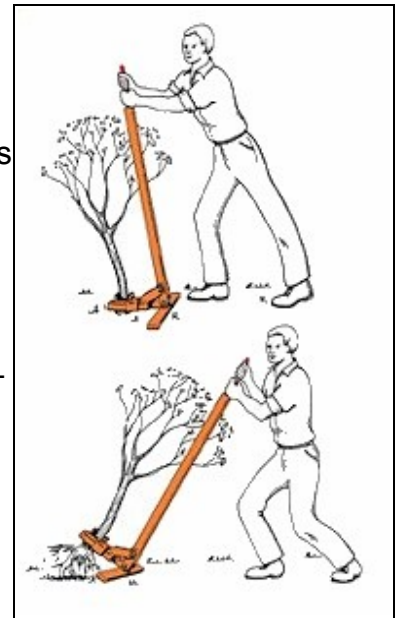
THE SECIA TOOL CRIB

All tools are landscape/gardening tools, no construction-type and no power tools

The most lent tool is the **weed wrench** - After that, our pruners, garden hoppers and long handled tools get frequent use.

Tiller, sod cutter & pole saw are the most requested tools that we do *not* carry – too difficult to deal with for the neighborhood office (maintenance, liability)

This same tool set is used at SE Como's own community gardens – 7 different locations on about 12 dates per month.



HOW SECIA's TOOL LENDING OPERATES

SE Como residents or community gardens (in or out of the neighborhood) reserve their desired tools ahead of time. Most folks use our online form tool which sends their request to SECIA staff.

A pick-up and drop-off times are arranged either at the SECIA office or at a SE Como community garden.

When demand for a tool is high, we try to facilitate neighbors handing tools off to the next neighbor.

Most individual lending in the neighborhood is for specialized tools (wheelbarrow, weed wrench, tree gators), while community garden lending is more often for large workdays which require quantities of basic tools (15 rakes, shovels, gloves).

We do not ask for deposits or fees, nor replacement costs if items get broken.

SEEMINGLY BEST PRACTISES

Having a staffed office location to host the tools makes for easier reserving and tracking tools.

Making the reservation process a streamlined online process keeps reservation information centralized.

We use a Google spreadsheet form, which allow look-up from any internet connection, and provides us with record keeping. We then transfer that reservation to a Google calendar.

The image shows a Google calendar interface for September 2009. The calendar is viewed in a 'Month' view, with days of the week (Mon-Sun) and dates (31, Sep 1-5, 7-12, 14-19, 21-26, 28-30, Oct 1-3) visible. The calendar contains several reservations and events represented by colored bars:

- September 1: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar), "mike has WW" (orange bar).
- September 2: "Pat to have weed wrench" (orange bar).
- September 3: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 4: "Labor Day" (pink bar), "5:30p Jake took weed wrench" (orange bar).
- September 5: "Lynn Mayo need WW, must get it to her" (orange bar), "5p Lynn Mayo wants to pick-u" (orange bar), "Patriot Day" (pink bar).
- September 6: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 7: "Lynn Mayo need WW, must matt nix to have weed wrench" (orange bar).
- September 8: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 9: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 10: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 11: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 12: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 13: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 14: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 15: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 16: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 17: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 18: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 19: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 20: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 21: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 22: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 23: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 24: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 25: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 26: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 27: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 28: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 29: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- September 30: "Lila has 4 tree gators for Talmadge trees" (orange bar).
- October 1: "Kathy K has water cooler Using it for block event, she also has the weed wrench probably til Monday." (orange bar).
- October 2: "Kathy K has water cooler Using it for block event, she also has the weed wrench probably til Monday." (orange bar).
- October 3: "Kathy K has water cooler Using it for block event, she also has the weed wrench probably til Monday." (orange bar).

Costs for operating the lending program were low after the tools were acquired. The minimal time arranging and checking up on tools fits into general overhead expenses, this is not stand alone funded project. We do not market this heavily. Instead word of mouth and our routine neighborhood communications are how its publicized.

Have a system in place to clean, sharpen and store tools at the end of the season.

SOURCING TOOLS

The bulk of our tools were donated. For example from individuals, the former Urban Lands program, the Fiskars Orange Thumb tool grant, and by MN Green (of the Minnesota Horticultural Society).

Additionally, SECIA makes it a practice to write in tool expenses into every gardening and tree grant application or sponsorship. This helps with attrition.

Tools that need the most replacing are the pruning tools. They do not wear well in community gardens.



Our most "Charlie Brown" tool is the garden waste collapsible containers. These are hard-wearing, pop-up containers to collect leaves, weeds and trimmings. They are in constant use and some of our bins have been in service for over 5 years!

The favorite tool of community gardeners are Asian-style hand cultivators or weeders- they are multi-functional and strong.



Can't do grants? Estate sales are a good place to find tools. Sellers are not that interested in garden tools as they focus on higher dollar items. Deals can be made, and treasures can be found.

LINKS

- SECIA's Tool Lending form can be found on this page:
<http://secomo.org/drupal/index.php?q=secia-tool-lending>
- California Public Libraries offer tool lending. Example:
http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/branches/tll_toolsched.html
- TreeGators -<http://www.treegator.com/>
- Weed Wrench- www.weedwrench.com
- Orange Thumb Tool grant page <http://www2.fiskars.com/Activities/Project-Orange-Thumb>
- This document can be found on the SE Como Greenvillage website.
www.ComoGreenVillage.org . Go to About ----->files