



Editor's Choice



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It's time you considered having a little bit of extra comfort as you garden



Take a sweeping poll among your friends and ask, 'Do you use a kneeler?' Younger gardeners will often reply with a no, and back this up by explaining that it's just one more thing to think about. I liken it to admitting that you wear slippers (I for one wouldn't be without mine). Those with paved gardens will often rely on kneelers on a daily basis, and older gardeners or those who feel the odd ache and pain clutch on to them for grim death. I use mine for cleaning the kitchen floor, or if I'm gardening in a pair of jeans of which I'd rather not lose the knees. In truth, though, we should all use them far more often than we do - not just to save our clothes, but to save our knees, and avoid problems such as housemaid's knee. This is an inflammation caused by repeated friction between the skin and knee cap. Something as simple as a kneeler can often help gardeners with arthritis continue to enjoy gardening.

On a more merry note, and leaving health issues behind (because ultimately gardening is incredibly good for you), you can always tell a gardener who is settling down to some serious weeding by the presence of a kneeler. If my mother emerges out of the house with a kneeler under one arm and a radio under the other then I know she is going to set to the ground elder for a good few hours.

In my previous life as the owner of a small gardening shop, kneelers were my top-selling item, even above hand trowels and gloves. The reason for this is that they make the perfect gift. They're the sort of item that you rarely buy for yourself, but if you get one, it's a treat. Other attributes that make them obvious presents are that they are easy to wrap and light to post. The variety available is tremendous, and you won't struggle to find one that suits the gardener you have in mind.

So think of those patellas, and the jeans, and avoid that horrid damp feeling by treating yourself or someone you love to a comfy little knee cushion.

With thanks to Stockton Bury Gardens, Hereford
www.stocktonbury.co.uk



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'In my previous life as the owner of a small gardening shop, kneelers were my top-selling item'

1 The Kneelo™ is my **EDITOR'S CHOICE**, thanks to its funky looks and comfy shock-absorbing EVA foam cushion. It is just so comfy and I found myself finding excuses to use it. It also has a memory foam layer, so, like a comfy shoe, it will fit to you. The cover is made of waterproof neoprene, and is wipe clean and quick to dry. Available in six really fun and cheery colours - I might buy two. Priced at £14.95.

2 Jolly by Alsa kneeler is a rather dashing red and offers a cushioned feel. Comes with a handle and is simple to wash. When kneeling you are restricted to how far apart you can position your knees, as it leaves you little option except to place your knees in the indents provided. Lightweight, and has a width of 27cm. A little restrictive for me, but it is good for your knees, manufactured from a foam material with millions

of tiny air bubbles, making for a comfortable, soft cushion. Priced at £19.95.

3 This Waterproof Linen Kneeler from Bradley's looks great and would make a wonderful gift. It measures 53cm x 21cm and has a leather pocket and handle. I have an issue with pockets in kneelers, as filling them with items could ultimately involve you kneeling on something. To me, the pocket is just a gimmick that looks nice at point of sale. The waterproof linen is wipeable, so it won't need washing, but water will bead on it when working in the rain. It offers a firm cushion with not as much give as most, but it's comfy. Plainer designs are available if you prefer. It's not cheap, but some gardeners will find the look too good to resist. Made in the UK in Shropshire using traditional tannery methods, and will stand the test of time. Priced at £30.

4 The Garden Kneeling Pad is the largest one on test, measuring 55cm x 26cm, with a 5cm-deep cushion. Unisex in design, it offers a leather handle and pocket - those pockets again! Lightweight, 100% polyester and easy to wash by hand. Priced at £19.95.

5 The Garden Kneeler Stool does exactly what it says on the tin. Although quite bulky, it is light, and I like the fact it needs no construction. Although not designed for climbing on, it did help me reach the top shelf in the shed, and it was ideal for sitting on to take a break. On the odd occasion, my arms knocked into the arms of the kneeler, but it was easy to get up with their assistance (I must be getting older). Height 24cm and length 63cm. Made of heavy-duty plastic - I would have preferred a more cushioned kneeler. Priced at £12.99.



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STOCKISTS

- **Kneelo™** from Burgon & Ball
www.burgonandball.com
- **Jolly by Alsa Soft Kneeler**
Tel: 0845 0920283.
www.sarahraven.com
- **The Waterproof Linen Kneeler**
Bradley's the Tannery. Tel: +44 (0)1746
766563. www.bradleysthetannery.co.uk
- **The Garden Kneeling Pad**
Tel: 0845 4025300.
www.harrodhorticultural.com
- **The Garden Kneeler Stool**
Tel: 0845 3450728.
www.greenfingers.com

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