



### Gardener's Gear: Rain Boots and Jackets

There are several drawbacks to gardening in the rain, even beyond the ones that first come to mind! Wet soil compacts easily, and footsteps cause damage to the soil structure by compressing the areas where roots grow. Many plant diseases spread through moisture, so brushing against a wet, diseased plant then touching a healthy one may spread the disease.

Those issues aside, sometimes the situation is right to work in the rain. For instance, you may have stone pathways to walk on in the garden. Or perhaps you garden in containers or raised beds and therefore can avoid damaging wet garden soil. And of course, timing can be a key aspect; sometimes it rains during the only chance you have to work in the garden that week.

Cloudy or misty days are great for planting seedlings in the garden, as these days are gentle on the plants as they adjust to their new location. And spending time in the garden in the rain can be peaceful and restorative for you as well as for the plants!

In order to most comfortably work in the rain, we have a few suggestions for gardening gear. The key to staying cozy in the rain is wearing a waterproof layer over a warm one. Most seasons call for this type of layering on a rainy day. On hot summer afternoons, you probably won't mind getting soaked— but summer mornings and evenings can still be chilly. Protective boots are a must for rainy days, and a comfortable jacket can help keep your core dry and warm. Here are some of our favorite options:

- *Insulated rubber boots:* rain boots with liners or warm, neoprene boots are two good options. [Bogs](#) are supportive and good quality and come in various heights. For a more affordable option, purchase rubber boots for around \$20 at a farm supply store, then pick up a pair of [liners](#) or thick wool socks for chilly days.
- *Garden clogs:* for summer days, these protect feet from rain or dew-soaked grass, without being too hot. Be forewarned, though; a chilly, dewy summer morning can quickly turn into a scalding, humid afternoon. So have breathable backup footwear for later in the day, to avoid walking in puddles of sweat!
- *Rain jackets:* Check out a camping discount store, like [Campmor](#), [Sierra Trading Post](#), or [REI Outlet](#), to find deals on rain coats. These jackets have been engineered for activity, so they work well for gardening. If possible, find one that offers vents for breathability (great for when you are working hard in the rain) and a hood. Ponchos can work fine for short times in the garden or during heavy downpours, but in general they tend to be bulky and can make it hard to work.
- *Rain hat:* If you are in the market for a new sun hat anyway, consider finding one that's waterproof, so you can wear it in the rain, too. It's a lot easier to do garden tasks without rain dripping in your

eyes! A medium or large brim helps keep the rain at bay. Here are two options: [Gore-Tex](#) and [canvas](#).

- *Layering:* During times of year when you are trying to keep warm, remember that wool and polyester fleece stay warm when they're wet. They make good options for damp, cold days, as layers underneath your waterproof exterior.