

This Month's Best New Stuff

Topping the list of **INSTANT MUST-HAVES** are the NBA's new basketball, a sleek GPS personal trainer, a Leatherman for gardeners, a 4GB flash-drive MP3 player, and a dog collar that prevents strangulation. *By Joel Weber*



GARDENING MULTITOOL

LEATHERMAN Hybrid

In addition to raking leaves, autumn brings a host of other gardening chores: dividing, transplanting, pruning. What we like best about Leatherman's Hybrid is the same thing we like about the 23-year-old company's traditional all-in-one multitool: convenience. Unfold the rubber handles to release the shears and eight other instruments, including a grafting tool, a weed remover, a saw, and a sprinkler-head tool. After you've winterized your yard, sharpen the Hybrid's blades and stash it in its nylon sheath 'til spring. [**\$75; leatherman.com**]



PERSONAL TRAINER

GARMIN Forerunner 305

Explore the potential of GPS by using the Forerunner 305 with Garmin's motionbase.com. Say you take it for a run on the same course every day for a week. Upload the stats it collects to the website, then watch a "dot race" of each day's run — all on a Google Earth overlay. The 305 also records your heart rate (when paired with a monitor), speed, distance, pace, and calories burned. [**\$350; garmin.com**]

PET SAFETY

TAZLAB Safe-T-Stretch Dog Collar

When Rick Fredland heard that a friend's 70-lb malamute choked to death when its collar got stuck on a backyard fence, he began hunting for a safer collar design. Finding nothing worthy of his puppy Tasman, the tinkerer teamed up with a designer. The result is a collar that stretches if unleashed dogs get snagged but remains tight when attached to a leash. [**\$15; tazlab.com**]

STRETCH COLLAR Elastic allows a pooch to free itself if its collar gets caught.



NAVIGATE Browse through the Zen V's menus with an easy-to-use joystick.



TINY MP3 PLAYER

Actual size

CREATIVE LABS Zen V Plus

Although Apple rules digital-music players, Creative Labs' devices play a strong second fiddle. Like the Nano, the 2.7-in-long Zen V Plus uses flash memory (1GB-4GB) instead of a hard drive — which means it can endure a fall without jeopardizing your music collection. Unlike the Nano, it plays video (on a 1.5-in OLED screen), records voice memos, and has FM radio. The Zen Aurvana earbuds (**\$100, not included**) use noise-reduction technology developed for hearing aids. [**from \$130; us.creative.com**]

NBA BASKETBALL

SPALDING Official NBA Game Ball

No longer will leather basketballs bounce on the hardwood courts of the NBA. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 season in October, for only the second time in 60 seasons, the league will begin using newly designed game balls. The NBA claims the new material — an indoor-only microfiber composite — provides better grip, feel, and consistency than leather and eliminates break-in time. In place of the eight-panel design used since 1970, balls will consist of only two interlocking X-shaped panels, providing more orange surface area. [**\$100; spalding.com**]

