

WANTED



FLOWERS

October's flower is the **calendula**, also known as pot marigold. It can be used in cookery—the bright orange petals add a touch of bitterness—and is reputed to have antiseptic qualities. But though this is officially the hardy annual's month, it's best to wait until spring to sow seeds outdoors. (\$3.95 for a packet of 100 seeds, burpee.com)



cooktop." (Polder Single-Tear Paper Towel Holder, \$24.99, polder.com)

4. THERMOMETER

"I'm a stickler on temp control," says Brown, who relies on the Thermapen, a high-tech thermometer with a giant retractable needle. "It's superfast and highly, highly accurate." (\$96, thermoworks.com)

5. STEEL LOTUS

Rather than buy a pricey multilever steamer, Brown screwed three folding steamer baskets together. "I replaced the center post with a piece of threaded stock long enough to mount two more baskets on top," he says, "and suddenly, I can steam 50 pieces of chicken at once and fit them all in one pot."

6. PANINI PRESS

"I've come to depend on my panini press for everything from roast chicken to omelets," Brown says. "It makes the most perfect omelets: you throw in all your vegetables, close the lid and mix up your eggs, put them in, count to 10, fold the thing up, and eat." (Krupps Universal Grill Panini Maker, \$79.99, krups.com)

7. TURKEY DERRICK

Deck fires and serious burns are side dishes to many a fried turkey. "If there are any frozen pieces in the middle of the turkey, that water vaporizes and throws oil out of the pot," explains Brown. So he built the turkey derrick, an 8-foot ladder rigged with cable pulleys over a propane-fueled pot, which lets the bird be lifted and lowered safely. "During the holidays I was in coastal Georgia and needed a ladder. They'd sold out at the hardware store, because people were making turkey derricks!"

TOOLS OF MY TRADE

ALTON BROWN

The cookbook author and Food Network star shows off the gadgets in his kitchen that make for some good eats.

—KATE ROCKWOOD



1. PIZZA CUTTER

"When I have to cut something, I'll always think, Can I use a pizza cutter instead of a knife?" says Brown. "A rolling blade doesn't squish things the way a knife does, which means it does a better job with things like puff-pastry dough. This one is unique because the handle doesn't stick out from the side. When you press down, your hand is right over the blade, for better control." (Zyliss pizza wheel, \$9.99, zylissusa.com)

2. BLOWHARD

Brown wanted to make top-notch beef jerky that evoked his Scout days, but commercial dehydrators incorporate heating elements as well as fans. "Real jerky isn't heated; it's dried," he says. So he built the Blowhard, an airflow-only dehydrator for jerky, herbs, and fruits, made by layering a box fan with home-furnace filters and bungee cords. "Fancy dehydrators," he sniffs, "aren't as good as the Blowhard."

3. PAPER-TOWEL HOLDER

"This is by all means and with no exceptions the finest paper-towel holder on earth," he says. "You can cut a paper towel with one hand, get exactly the amount you want, and the roll doesn't unspool itself. If you have one thing that you use every day that's beautifully made, that beats the tar out of any \$10,000

/// **Good Eats**, the only instructional cooking show on prime time, lures more than 20 million viewers a month to the Food Network, thanks to its quirky humor, geeky insights, and DIY ethos. So it's no surprise that star Alton Brown, who also writes and directs each episode, brings those same traits to his James Beard Foundation Award-winning cookbooks. Ahead of the debut of his latest, *Good Eats 2: The Middle Years*, we ask the Atlanta native to

walk us through his kitchen and tell us about some of his favorite devices. If you're expecting a place packed with culinary paraphernalia, you'll be disappointed. "I use less and less stuff each year," says Brown. "My wife and I went to see the rebuild of Julia Child's kitchen in Washington, D.C., and we were both shocked to see the amount of junk in there. Tools that do one little obscure job. I thought to myself: I couldn't live in here! I'd suffocate."