

# Tried & tested

## Anvil secateurs



Time to prune back some of that old growth. Consumer editor **Julia Heaton** puts six anvil types to the test

ANVIL SECATEURS are great for cutting woody stems during the autumn. This week I tried out six, including some ratchet action types, where the handles are repeatedly squeezed together to release and cut gradually.

Using material of different densities – lilac, robinia, rose and cherry – I considered

cutting capacity, ease of use of the safety catch and handle size. With all of them, the maximum diameter of cut was reduced the harder the wood I tackled.

Remember to try them for size before you buy to ensure they are the right size for your hands. All on trial here are suitable for both left and right-handed users.



£17.99

**WOLF RS 19**  
E.P. Barrus Limited  
☎ 0845 2707603  
🌐 [wolf-garten.co.uk](http://wolf-garten.co.uk)

**BUILD ★★★★★**

Precision-ground non-stick blade that cuts against a recycled aluminium anvil. Bright red polypropylene handles.

**FEATURES ★★★★★**

Has an anti-slip grip on the handle and a nifty locking knob that does not catch or protrude yet is easy to locate with a push of the thumb. The only tool with a wrist strap included. Maximum size of cut is ¾in (19mm).

**PERFORMANCE ★★★**

There is an indentation on the handle so the index finger can give extra power during use. It gave a superbly clean cut, and tackled twiggy growth as well as thin hard stems of the cherry.

**VALUE ★★★★★**

The handles were the perfect size for me making these a very comfortable pair of secateurs. I also loved the smooth action of the locking device. An ideal pair for the general pruning of shrubs and roses.

£16.95

**BURGON AND BALL RATCHET PRUNER**  
☎ 0114 2338262  
🌐 [Burgonandball.com](http://Burgonandball.com)

**BUILD ★★★★★**

Precision-ground high carbon steel blade and alloy handles. The curved blade cuts against an alloy anvil with a sap groove.

**FEATURES ★★★★★**

One of three ratchet pruners, it cuts material up to ¾in (20mm). There's also a looped handle to help protect the back of your hand if you're not wearing gloves. On the downside I found squeezing the handles together to release the locking device, a little fiddly.

**PERFORMANCE ★★★★★**

Easy to use, cutting any stem up to the maximum diameter and at any angle. They cut cleanly, easily and were extremely sharp. A curved blade helps you access and hold a stem while using the ratchet facility. It outshone the rest, requiring less effort.

**VALUE ★★★★★**

An impressive tool, I could use it all day tackling thick hard wood branches without a hitch.

## Electric Shredder Chipper

ANY TREE work involves getting rid of the prunings or hedge clippings afterwards. With so much bulky waste it's worth investing in a shredder/chipper for its speed and ease of use. Henschman's petrol and electric models boast a patented cutting principle designed to cut the wood along the grain like miniature hatchets. This results in a more uniform chip size, where the grain is damaged and squashed, making it suitable for mulching and composting because decomposition is faster. The Neo 2 Electric chips branches up to 1in (3.5cm) diameter.

■ Henschman's Neo 2 Electric Shredder/Chipper costs £695 available from the company direct. ☎ (01635) 299 847 or visit 🌐 [henschman.co.uk](http://henschman.co.uk)





£22.49

**SPEAR & JACKSON  
RAZORSHARP  
ADVANTAGE MEDIUM**  
© 0114 281 4242

**BUILD ★★★**

PTFE coated carbon steel chopping blade with capacity to cut 5/8 in (15mm) diameter stems. Bright red plastic handles

**FEATURES ★★★★★**

Contoured ergonomic shape and non-slip grips incorporated into both handles. The locking device was one of the easiest to operate with my thumb. It also has a sap groove in the blade, textured plastic edges to the anvil to hold stems in place and a shock absorber.

**PERFORMANCE ★★★**

Will never be as powerful as those with a ratchet but was incredibly sharp and had a nice smooth action. They coped well with hardwood prunings and handles had a soft feel to them.

**VALUE ★★★**

Cut through thin hard wood stems with least jarring of all those on trial. I can recommend these for easy handling and overall comfort.



£12.99

**YEOMAN ADVANTAGE  
ANVIL SECATEUR**  
© 01905 791 984  
yeomangarden.com

**BUILD ★★★**

A straight blade made of carbon steel with a non-stick coating and a flat plastic anvil. All other manufacturers' rivets and bolts were flush to the main body, but this pair had a screw head protruding from the main pivot. Diameter cut 3/4in (20mm).

**FEATURES ★★★**

The 'Advanced' stamp refers to the black nylon fibreglass handles. A handy pruning guide is given on the packaging.

**PERFORMANCE ★★★**

Light and slim with a drop nose blade to give access among congested branches. Faired worst when cutting hard wood but coped fine cutting roses and woody lilac stems.

**VALUE ★★★**

Despite its shortcomings on thicker stems, the small size model was light and comfortable to use. Fine for light trimming of shrubs, but keep heavy pruning for the ratchet boys.



£12.95

**DARLAC CLASSIC  
RATCHET DP444**  
Darlac © 01753 547790  
Darlac.com

**BUILD ★★★★★**

Mid range among Darlac's ratchet models with a cutting capacity of 1in (25mm). Carbon steel blade is Teflon coated to help resist rust. Deep red plastic handles.

**FEATURES ★★★★★**

This has a curved blade to help hold branches and make angled cuts. The handle has a three cushion grip on one side.

**PERFORMANCE ★★★**

The power of the ratchet helped cut through all the thick hardwood stems with the exception of the robinia. They were light and easy to squeeze. But, for me, the downfall of these secateurs was the locking mechanism, which was extremely stiff and cumbersome to operate.

**VALUE ★★★**

They cut a treat and are warmer on the hands than the alloy ratchets. Just a shame that they are let down by the lock device.



£12.40

**BULLDOG RATCHET  
SECATEURS**  
Bulldogtools.co.uk  
from garden centres

**BUILD ★★★★★**

High carbon steel curved blade, anvil includes sap groove. Cutting diameter 3/4in (20mm). Alloy anvil and handles. One year guarantee.

**FEATURES ★★★★★**

Looped handle protection, easy sliding handle lock, textured non-slip grip, oil dispenser, and not forgetting the ratchet facility for thick branches.

**PERFORMANCE ★★★★★**

Couldn't fault the cutting ability of this tool, it just couldn't match Burgon and Ball's successful cut of a thick robinia branch. The chunky handle felt durable and the loop lets you work in congested or prickly areas. The side safety catch had a positive sliding lock, much easier to use than some of the other types.

**VALUE ★★★★★**

Versatile, durable, and an excellent all-rounder at a great price. Once you've tried a ratchet anvil there's no going back – these are the future.