

Garden gear

Garden jobs and projects

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TESTED

BY READERS

Pruning tools

There are many pruning tools on offer, but which ones were a cut above the rest in our reader test?

Garden gear

This month's testers are all members of the Potters Bar Horticultural Society and they had their work cut out testing each of the 12 pruning tools we offered up for scrutiny.

There was a wide variety of products to test including secateurs, shears and loppers. The six testers were asked to try each of them and report back with marks out of five for value for money, effectiveness, appearance, ease of use and durability.

Some were tools our testers would use every day while others were more specialised, for specific jobs in the garden.

Once both the scores and comments were noted, we were left with a clear overall winner. However, the question of which were the best budget buy and which the most desirable, created much more debate.

THE PRUNE TOOL TESTERS



Bryan Stutter



Sue Stutter



Colin Smale



Margaret Smale



Alan Trowbridge



Dave Davis



Colin and Dave compare the Burgon and Ball anvil secateurs and the Alan Titchmarsh ratchet secateurs

BURGON AND BALL ANVIL SECATEURS

These secateurs have a fully hardened and tempered, high carbon steel blade, durable resin anvil and alloy handles covered with a comfortable bright orange grip. Cuts up to 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) diameter.

PRICE £16.95

FROM www.burgonandball.com

Bryan said "They have a good catch and feel nice and heavy."



Sue tests the Bosch Ciso cordless secateurs

FISKARS TELESCOPIC BYPASS LOPPERS

These bypass loppers have strong, lightweight aluminium blades. The upper blade has a non-stick coating which makes for easier cutting while the extendable handles mean more leverage as well as a longer reach.

PRICE £29.99

FROM eng-uk.fiskars.com

Colin said "The adjustment mechanism is really good but, when they're fully extended, it isn't as easy to cut."





DARLAC STANDARD TELESCOPIC POLE PLUS TREE PRUNERS

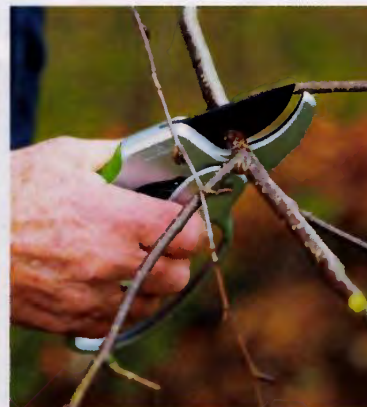
The pole extends from 1.32m (4ft) to 2.44m (8ft). It has a double pulley and compound action for easier pruning and a maximum cut of 2.5cm (1in). **PRICE** Pole £16 and tree pruner head £15.95 (15 other attachments available) **FROM** www.twowests.co.uk

Sue said "It's very good and easy to adjust, in fact, it's as good as any I have tried."

DARLAC TOPIARY SHEARS

Traditional shaping tool and ideal for general trimming around the garden. Light and easy to handle with a carbon steel grip and blades. **PRICE** £11.20 **FROM** www.darlac.com

Bryan said "They're quite hard work but they do cut well. Also, being a really bright red colour, if you put them down, you won't lose them."



ALAN TITCHMARSH RATCHET SECATEURS

Ratchet secateurs that are ideal for cutting back overgrown bushes and foliage and the ratchet mechanism helps tackle thicker twigs and branches. **PRICE** £11.99 **FROM** www.bulldoghandtools.co.uk

Sue said "They're juddery, not a smooth action at all and the locking catch is too tight - I couldn't even open it!"

BURGON AND BALL LEATHER-HANDLED SHEARS

Soft squeeze topiary shears with leather handles which come in a dark green gift box. There's a choice of pink or brown leather and two sizes. **PRICE** £29.95 small or £34.95 large **FROM** www.burgonandball.com

Margaret said "They cut very well and certainly do the job, but they're a little too stiff to use for any length of time."



BURGON AND BALL CUT-AND-HOLD PRUNERS

Bypass cutters for thorny plants or ones that irritate the skin. The blades' squeezing action causes a gripping device to lock onto the stem, holding it firmly, so you don't have to touch the plant at all.

PRICE £15.95

FROM www.burgonandball.com

Margaret said "They are very good and comfortable. For the price, they do a great job."



FISKARS LARGE BYPASS PROFESSIONAL GEAR ACTION PRUNERS

These pruners have a gear action mechanism for increased cutting power and an ergonomically angled cutting head design.

PRICE £21.99

FROM eng-uk.fiskars.com

Colin said "I like these, they're a nice shape and work well, but you can catch your finger on the narrow edge of the handle."



SPEAR AND JACKSON RAZORSHARP 26IN ADVANCE LOPPERS

A heavy duty anvil lopping jaw action means more power with less effort. The anvil is coated for smoother cutting, and the handles have non-slip grips. Max cutting diameter 4.5cm (2in)

PRICE £34.99

FROM www.spear-and-jackson.com

Sue said "They deal with any thick stuff easily. The only problem is the head is a little too wide."



DARLAC GARDENERS SCISSORS

Tough, rust-resistant and razor sharp, these scissors are ideal for deadheading, light pruning and cutting twine. The blades are made of chrome-plated carbon steel and the PVC grips mould to suit your hand.

PRICE £7.50

FROM www.darlac.com

Colin said "A really nice sharp pair of scissors. They're expensive, but they are more robust than they look."



Sue and Margaret discuss the merits of the Burgon and Ball cut-and-hold pruners



FISKARS UNIVERSAL TELESCOPIC GARDEN CUTTERS

This multi-use tool extends to 3.4m (11ft) and the cutting angle can be adjusted by up to 26 degrees. The adjustable head and sliding cutting mechanism ensures fast, easy and safe pruning. **PRICE £99.99**
FROM eng-uk.fiskars.com













Alan said "The cutter is good and long, but it is quite difficult to handle and has limited use."



BOSCH CISO CORDLESS SECATEURS

Innovative battery powered secateurs with a strong "Power-Blade System" for effortless pruning and a cutting diameter of up to 1.4cm (1/2in). Also features an easy- to-use charger and safety lock. **PRICE £59.99**
FROM www.bosch.co.uk

Dave said "It's good, apart from the trigger - when you go to use it, there isn't any space for your finger between the guard and the trigger."

TOOLS	VALUE FOR MONEY	EFFECTIVENESS	APPEARANCE	EASE OF USE	DURABILITY	OVERALL
B and B Anvil 	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	19
B and B Leather 	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	18
Darlac Pole 	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	22
Bosch Cordless 	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	20
Alan Titchmarsh 	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆	☆☆	12
Fiskars Lopper 	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	20
B and B Cut and Hold 	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	23
Fiskars Large Bypass 	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	20
S and J Razorsharp 	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	21
Fiskars Cutter 	☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆	16
Darlac Topiary 	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆	☆☆☆☆	17
Darlac Scissors 	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	19

BURGON AND BALL CUT-AND-HOLD PRUNERS

These ingenious pruners were popular and scored well with everyone. The fact is, they do what they say they do - they grip before cutting and they cut very well indeed. Our panel also liked the fact that they were not too big or too expensive!



DARLAC POLE WITH TREE PRUNER AND THE BURGON AND BALL CUT-AND-HOLD PRUNERS

We tried to get everyone to choose just one winner in this category, but they wouldn't budge. The Burgon and Ball Pruners were chosen for the reasons already stated. The Darlac Tree Pruners were praised for doing a great job for a modest price.



BURGON AND BALL LEATHER-HANDLED SHEARS

All members of the panel would be delighted to get the Burgon and Ball Leather Handled Shears as a gift. They all felt they had a real quality about them and the added touch of the soft leather-covered handles and an attractive box made them too desirable to ignore.

