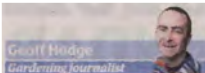


Sharp around the edges

Geoff Hodge looks sharp and checks out a wide range of tool sharpeners available on the market now



Geoff Hodge
Gardening Journalist

loppers and other pruners. A good, sharp blade will produce a clean cut - essential when pruning plants to ensure the cut heals quickly and prevents disease problems. Less obvious are hoes. When hoeing, the aim is to slice through the weeds' stems at or near ground level with a sharp blade - not bludgeon them to death

with a blunt one!

It always amazes me how few people even know about this - let alone carry it out.

When I give talks to gardening clubs and ask the audience the question, usually less than 10% of them sharpen their secateurs and even fewer sharpen their hoes.

In fact, I met one person who buys a new blade for his

secateurs every year. When asked why, he said to have a sharp blade, obviously! He was amazed that the blade could be sharpened.

I've had my current secateurs for more than 18 years and have never replaced the blade; I sharpen it whenever I use them.

There are numerous types of sharpeners available.

Carborundum and oil stones have been around forever and anyone that looks after their household or woodworking tools is likely to have one in the shed. But generally they are really quite large and cumbersome and you couldn't carry them around with you when gardening.

Now we have a wide range of small, hand-held

sharpeners that are really handy for us gardeners.

Some are based on diamond - one of the hardest materials known to man - so are bound to get a good, nice sharp blade. Others use other hard materials, such as tungsten carbide - which is only beaten in hardness by diamond, so again will give a very good blade finish.

Multi-sharp Tools Secateur & Lopper Sharpener

Silicon carbide sharpener. For secateurs, loppers, pruners and knives. Grinding jig locks to blade to ensure sharpening at the correct angle.

- Length 5cm (2in)
- Price guide £5.95



Multi-Sharp Tools Shear & Scissor Sharpener

Tungsten carbide sharpener. For scissors and shears. Screws on to a bench or the back of a shed door - screws included.

- Length 15cm (6in)
- Price guide £6.50

Both these sharpeners are available as part of a Gardening Tool Sharpening Kit, which also include a sharpener for either cylinder mower or rotary mower blades. The rotary mower sharpener will also sharpen hoes, spades, edging irons and axes.

- Price guide £15.95-£20.40, depending on mower type and size

Comment for both the tools secateur & lopper sharpener and tools shear and scissor sharpener Neither tool is suited for carrying around while you garden.

The sharpening kits are great value for money and suitable for all your garden tools.



Spear & Jackson Razorsharp 6-in-1 Blade Sharpener

Tungsten carbide and aluminium oxide sharpener with different sharpeners for different tools. For knives, scissors, secateurs, loppers and shears. Anti-rust and cleaning, lubricating oil and pad stored in the handle. Plastic body with non-slip grip and built-in finger guard for protection.

- Length 11cm (4 1/4in)
- Price guide £8.49

Comment Very comfortable to use and will get into the tightest space, such as the base of secateur blades. Good hand guard for the squeamish.



Blade-Tech Knife Sharpener

Tungsten carbide sharpener. For knives, scissors, secateurs, loppers, shears, mower blades and scythes. Comes with a canvas belt pouch to protect the sharpener.

- Length 7.5cm (3in)
- Price guide £10
- Comment** Very handy and small enough to get into the tightest space, such as the base of secateur blades.



Bosmere Sharpening Stone

A two grade sharpening stone for sharpening all types of blades from garden shears, secateurs, chisels, scissors and knives to mowers. Use with household oil for best results.

- Length 19.5cm (7 1/2in)
- Price guide £4.25

Comment Although too large to carry around the garden, this is very good for sharpening a wide range of garden tools, especially larger blades, including shears, hoes and even spades.



Bosmere Multi Sharpener

Tungsten carbide sharpener. For knives, scissors, snips and secateurs. Anti-rust and cleaning, oil wipe pad stored in the handle. Fibreglass reinforced nylon body with built-in plastic finger guard for protection.

- Length 15cm (6in)
- Price guide £9.75

Comment Very comfortable to use and will get into the tightest space, such as the base of secateur blades. Finger guard for the squeamish.



Burgon & Ball Sharpening Steel

The Sharpening Steel is ideal for sharpening medium-sized blades, such as shears.

- Length 19cm (7 1/2in)
- Price guide £9.95

Burgon & Ball Miniature Sharpening Steel

The Miniature Sharpening Steel is perfect for carrying around the garden to sharpen small knives, secateurs and other small-bladed cutting tools.

- Length 9.5cm (3 1/2in)
- Price guide £7.95

Comment for both sharpening steels Good traditional sharpening steels. These are both magnetised, so the fillings stick to the steel rather than remaining on the blade where they are liable to go rusty.



Creative Products Garden Sharp

Tungsten carbide sharpener. For knives, scissors, secateurs, loppers and shears. Anti-rust and cleaning, lubricating oil and pad stored in the handle.

- Length 15cm (6in)
- Price guide £6.99

Comment A handy sharpener for cutting tools.

Will get into the tightest space and is good value too.



Darlac DP100F & DP100C Diamond Sharpeners

Diamond sharpeners. Plastic handles. Use DP100F (fine) for pruners, knives, small blades and finishing off. Use DP100C (coarse) for shears and axes, roughing in and honing heavier steel blades.

- **Length** 15cm (6in)
- **Price guide** DP100F £7.99; DP100C £9.99
- **Comment** Pocket-sized sharpeners. It's useful having two grades, so you can get a good edge on a wide range of tools. And, considering they're diamond - extremely economical.



Win our 'best buy'

We have 10 pairs of the Best Buy Darlac Diamond Sharpeners to give away! Send your name and address to Garden News Tool Sharpener Giveaway, PO Box 57, Coates, Peterborough PE7 2FE or enter online at www.greatcompetitions.co.uk. Closing date is January 3. Please write 'do not contact' if you don't want to be contacted by us or by carefully selected partner organisations.



DMT Diamond DiaFold Sharpener

Diamond sharpener. For knives, scissors, secateurs, loppers and shears. Double sided: fine for putting on a sharp edge; coarse for sharpening a neglected edge. Folding handle to protect the sharpening surface.

- **Length** 24cm (9½in) when open
- **Price guide** £14
- **Comment** Very handy, especially as there are two grades on the same sharpener, so you can get a good edge on a wide range of tools. Folding handle protects the sharpening section.



Draper Tools TCT Multi Sharpener

Tungsten carbide sharpener. For knives, scissors, secateurs, loppers and shears. Anti-rust and cleaning pad stored in the handle.

- **Length** 12cm (4¾in)
- **Price guide** £5.99
- **Comment** Handy and lightweight and useful for a wide range of cutting and pruning tools.



Felco 903 Sharpener

Diamond sharpener. Made of diamond-coated hardened steel and perfect for the sharpening, strengthening and honing of a wide range of cutting tools.

- **Length** 11cm (4¾in)
- **Price guide** £24.99
- **Comment** Handy sharpener whose shape has been specially designed to reach all blade areas.



Fiskars Xsharp Axe and Knife Sharpener

Ceramic grindstone sharpener. Two-in-one sharpener with simple push mechanism to switch. Grooves for either axes or knives, which help produce the optimum blade sharpening angle.

- **Length** 16.5cm (6½in)
- **Price guide** £13.99
- **Comment** Good sharpener for knives or axes.



Suppliers

Blade-Tech
01492 642220
www.bladetech.co.uk

Bosmere
01293 586200
www.bosmere.com

Burgon & Ball
0114 233 8262
www.burgonandball.com

Creative Products
01476 564230
www.creativeproducts.ltd.uk

Darlac
01753 547790
www.darlac.com

DMT available from
Buy Brand Tools
0114 251 3535
www.buybrandtools.com

Axminster Power Tools
01297 630007
www.axminster.co.uk

Draper Tools
02380 266355
www.draper.co.uk

Felco from Burton McCall
0116 234 4611
www.uk.felco.com

Fiskars
0115 927 7335
www.fiskars.com

Multi-Sharp Tools
0870 727 0436
www.multi-sharp.com

Spear & Jackson
0114 281 4242
www.spear-and-jackson.com