



For those Hard to Reach Places - Safety is the Key

Melissa Toombs looks at a range of tools available for trimming hedges and cutting branches from ground level.

Safety is key when using electric or battery charged equipment. Being able to trim back trees and hedges is a necessity but the job can become dangerous when areas are hard to reach, inappropriate equipment is used and/or the operator lacks training. Telescopic handles, cordless models, variable tilt angles and cutter heads, and light weight models, can make all the difference when buying hand tools.

BRUSHCUTTERS

There are many varieties of brushcutter currently available, here are some points to consider before you buy:

- **Golf course size.** With more to trim, a bigger unit is required and petrol power is preferable to electric - electric models are designed for small greens with minimal work to do. Petrol trimmers around 24.5cc are enough for the average sized garden.
- **Physical fitness.** Brushcutting requires physical effort. If you use a model without a harness, extra strain can be put on your arm, wrist and hand. Buy a product that's as light as possible.
- **Handles.** Lighter models tend to have a single loop handle, while heavier machines have a double or handlebars handle that gives greater control against kickback.

Brushcutters are the ideal complement to power mowers and can be used wherever additional work is required. Handy for adding the finishing touches to your golf course, brushcutters can also be used to mow small patches of grass, quickly. There are two main types of petrol brushcutter:

Petrol 2 stroke trimmers - This variety of brushcutter has been around for some time now and is considered reliable and easy to use.

Petrol 4 stroke trimmers - 4 stroke power generally comes with lower

revs and is produced in a broader range. 4 strokes are quieter and produce less smoke emissions than the 2 stroke, also, the oil and fuel have separate containers and are mixed within the engine.

Brushcutters with engine sizes over 24.5cc range in price from £130 to £500.

Power tool dealer Echo, recently launched the low-noise brushcutter, SRM-350ESU. Fitted with a 34cm³ engine, the SRM-350ESU offers reduced pulling power on the starter rope and has no kickback effect in cranking.



With a weight of just 7.6kg, and a vibration figure of just 21.2m/sec², the SRM-350ESU can be operated safely for considerably longer than other brushcutters of this size, and with a fuel tank capacity of 0.84 litres, the unit will run much longer on one filling. Price £389 plus VAT

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Garfitts, a UK supplier of golf and turf machinery accessories, feature the CG350HW Honda 4 stroke brushcutter in their 2006 catalogue.



The 35cc CG350HW Honda features a heavy duty gearbox and drive shaft as well as a low vibration engine mount system. Price £265 plus VAT

Many one and two day courses are available at colleges all over Britain, covering the safe operation of the brushcutter in a variety of conditions, from checking the machine, fuelling and starting, examining components, machinery and safety markings and testing the brushcutter; to practical operation.



The 42cc, X-Series 8-42 has a super clean air filter system providing longer air filter life, reduced fuel consumption and increased power

CHAINSAWS

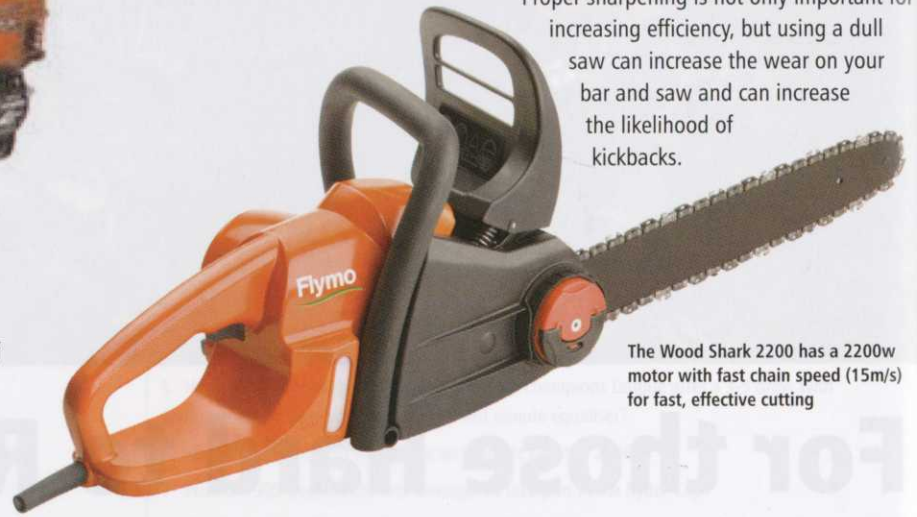
Anyone using a chainsaw at work should have received adequate training in safe use.

Poor operator training and lack of attention can lead to accidents. The right protective clothing must be worn in order to minimise risks.

The key to an effective, efficient chainsaw is a sharp chain. The chain may need sharpening when any of the following start to occur:

- You have to apply pressure on the bar to cut, rather than having the weight of the saw and bar be sufficient.
- The cut is uneven.
- The saw is producing more sawdust than wood chips.

Proper sharpening is not only important for increasing efficiency, but using a dull saw can increase the wear on your bar and saw and can increase the likelihood of kickbacks.



The Wood Shark 2200 has a 2200w motor with fast chain speed (15m/s) for fast, effective cutting

It's important to note that different types and sizes of saw chain need different sizes of files to sharpen.

Prices range from £250 for a 24.5cc chainsaw, to £778 for a 65cc model. New chains vary in price from £15 to £75.

McCulloch are due to launch the X-Series 8-42 chainsaw in January 2007.

Described as a super clean petrol chainsaw with advanced power, an easy start system and ergonomic design, the 2.1hp, X-Series 8-42, also has a tool-less chain tensioner allowing the operator to tighten their chain as easily as possible.

Flymo are set to launch the Wood Shark 2200 next spring, a powerful, easy to use electric chainsaw with advanced design for easy handling. This model also offers tool-less chain tensioning and is fitted with a clutch to prevent the motor overloading.

College and online courses in chainsaw training and maintenance are also available.

A pole saw or power pruner are useful if there doesn't happen to be a trained chainsaw operator on site as they offer less risk to the operator and the tree.

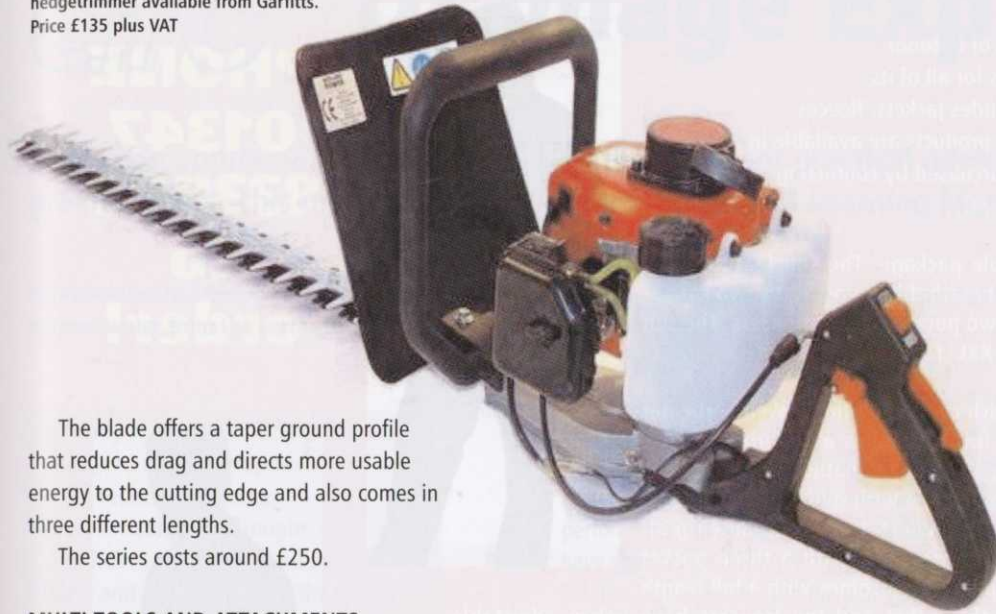
HEDGE TRIMMERS AND POLE SAWS

The two key elements to a good hedge trimmer are the power unit and the blade. The ability to adjust the cutting head to a different angle enables the unit to be used to cut the sides' tops and possibly the upper reaches of the offside of a hedge with one unit, worked from the same positions.

Pole saws and hedge trimmer blades on the end of extension poles can make lopping small branches and cutting tall hedges much easier.

The Hayate Telescoping Pole Saw series is the latest technological development in professional pole saw design from Silky. The efficient, state-of-art, aluminium-telescoping pole saw boasts a light weight aluminium pole and a comfort-grip handle with cushion tip and comes three lengths of 12', 16', 20' fully extended.

The 22cc SL 600 Double Blade
hedgetrimmer available from Garfitts.
Price £135 plus VAT



The blade offers a taper ground profile that reduces drag and directs more usable energy to the cutting edge and also comes in three different lengths.

The series costs around £250.

MULTI TOOLS AND ATTACHMENTS

Sometimes it's much easier to have one piece of equipment that can do various jobs, or a model that can easily be tweaked and changed to suit another working situation.

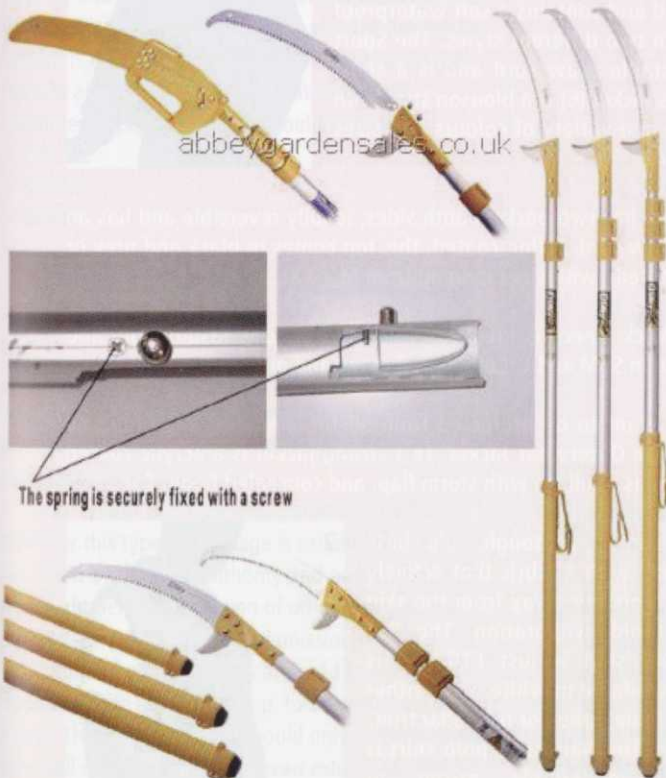
The XLT3000 Multi Tool from Flymo is a powerful, versatile petrol trimmer and brushcutter that can easily convert to other useful tools.

Multi tools cost around £140 with attachments varying in price from £40 to £80.

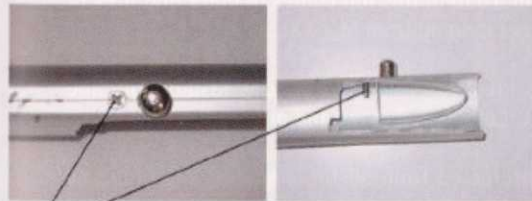
It is important that safety goggles and ear protectors are worn when working with power tools.



The XLT3000 Multi Tool has easy clip-on optional accessories, such as: a hedgetrimmer, edger, pole pruner, cultivator and blower



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The spring is securely fixed with a screw

The Hayate Telescoping Pole Saw series offers an ultra sharp non-set tooth design that cuts quickly leaving a silky smooth surface and provides outstanding performance for cross, rip and slant cuts