

Pick the right chain saw for specific applications

by Mark Michaels,
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■ All chain saws are not created equal.

There are many types and sizes of chain saws, ranging from lightweight bucket saws to heavy-duty stump saws.

Choose the correct saw for your work. A small bucket saw doesn't belong in the ground work role. Conversely, a stump saw is too heavy for tree pruning.

Select a chain saw for your business based on these factors:

- What do you intend to cut?
- What type of wood (hard or soft) and in what environment?
- How often—and under what conditions—will the saw be used?

Buy from a reputable dealer who both sells and services chain saws. Request a "test drive." Many dealers will have test areas behind their stores.

When comparing different models, look for qualities that will make the saw comfortable, quiet and reliable. Features such as anti-vibration and noise dampening systems, good balance and well-designed handles will make your saw easier and safer to use.

Don't be misled by bar length. That can make very different saws seem the same. Instead, look at engine size, weight and engine speed at maximum power.

By the way, don't be alarmed if your new saw looks like it has already done some cutting; it's just a sign that the dealer

has taken the time to check the saw and make adjustments.

Here are some of the features you might want in your new saw:

✓ solid-state ignition—eliminates the need for ignition tune-ups;

✓ anti-vibration system—reduces operator fatigue;

✓ manual and inertia-activated chain brake—better protection from chain saw kickback, regardless of the cutting position of the saw;

✓ steel ball-bearing supported crankshaft—contributes to a smoother running, more powerful engine with higher cutting speeds; and

✓ gear-driven automatic oiler—assures bar and chain are well lubricated during extended operation;



Look for safety features that reduce kickback: low-kickback chains, a chain brake and a guidebar with a small radius tip.

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CHAIN SAWS FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY

Manufacturer	Models	Displacement	Fuel cap.	Weight	Bar length
Ariens Circle No. 300	CS320 CS400	32-40 cc	8.5-15.2 oz.	8.2-11.7 lbs.	12-16 in.
Dolmar USA Circle No. 301	11 models 100-143	33-95cc	13.3-34 oz.	8.1-13 lbs.	14/16-20/36 in.
Echo Circle No. 302	10 models CS280E- CS8000	27.9-80.7 cc	6.8-27.7 oz.	8.6-16.3 lbs.	12/14-20/30 in.
Homelite Circle No. 303	12 models XL-Super 1050	30-100 cc	8.5-49.3 oz.	8.5-22.4 lbs.	10/16-23/60 in.
Husqvarna Circle No. 304	21 models 35-3120XP	34-119 cc	9.6-42.4 oz.	9-22.9 lbs.	10/18-20/60 in.
McCullough Circle No. 305	22 models Mac 110- Double Eagle 80	32-82 cc	10.8-25.6 oz.	8.9-17.2 lbs.	10-20/60 in.
Poulan/Weed Eater Circle No. 306	27 models 1800-PP655	30-98 cc	11.5-31.8 oz.	7.8-19 lbs.	10/16-16/36 in.
Redmax/ Komatsu Circle No. 307	5 models G300 TS- G621AVS	28.5-62 cc	7.5-22 oz.	8.5-14.9 lbs.	14-20/36 in.
Shindaiwa Circle No. 308	5 models 300S-695	28.5-57.3 cc	11.8-23.7 oz.	8.6-13 lbs.	10/14-16/24 in.
Solo Circle No. 309	11 models 634-603	34-103 cc	16-29.3 oz.	9.2-17.4 lbs.	14/16-16/42 in.
Stihl Circle No. 310	26 models 009EQ- 084AVREQ	40.8-121.6 cc	9.8-42.2 oz.	9-20.1 lbs.	12/14-25/50 in.
Tanaka Circle No. 311	5 models ECS-320 ECS-655	32-63 cc	8.5-20.4 oz.	8.2-15.1 lbs.	12/14-16/24 in.

NOTE: Models and specifications listed low-end first, high-end second; intermediate models not listed on this chart because of space considerations.

Source: LM mail/phone survey, Feb. 1992



After selecting a chain saw, make sure you are properly dressed. Protective clothing can reduce injuries if an accident does occur. That includes work gloves, a protective hard hat equipped with vision and earmuffs, protective pants or chaps, a well-ventilated shirt or jacket and steel-toed boots. Chain sharpening guides are available from your local servicing dealer, and brief instructions on field filing make sharp saws a relatively easy task for landscapers. Though daily filing may not always be necessary, such maintenance helps keep the saw performing at maximum capability.

Photo courtesy Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co.