

Lawn Mower Buying Guide

The range and variety of lawn mowers is now greater than ever before, but the good news for you is that today's technology means that there is a lawn mower to meet your particular needs. This buying guide has been put together to help you make the right selection.



Types of lawn mowers

The key factors to take into account when choosing a lawn mower are the size of your lawn, the shape and the type of turf that you have.

Hover mowers – these are ideally suited to small to medium sized lawns (ie. less than ½ a tennis court in size), although the higher powered, wider width cutting versions can deal with larger lawns. The hover mower floats on a cushion of air making it a “go anywhere mower”. They are also ideally suited to mowing slopes of up to 45 degrees. They will leave a longer grass finish and can cope with awkward areas. Hover mowers are space efficient when it comes to storage (the handle may fold so that the machine can be hung from a shed or garage wall, electric only). They come in electric or petrol versions.

Cylinder mowers – these are suitable for small to medium sized lawns (between ½ and 1 tennis court in size) and are ideal if you want a perfect, finely finished lawn. The blades rotate vertically like a cylinder against a bottom blade giving a fine, short cut. They are handy and manoeuvrable and work best on even and well manicured lawns. They come in manual (non-powered), electric and petrol operated versions. They usually have a rear roller so you can give your lawn a striped effect. Because of their relative compact size, they require little storage space. Cutting width range from 12” to 30” wide.

Rotary mowers – these versatile machines are good for small, medium to large sized lawns (up to 1 tennis court and above in size) and cope well with longer grass and uneven and irregular shaped lawns giving a good finish. On a rotary mower the blades rotate horizontally at the selected cutting height. They can be powered by either petrol or electricity. The petrol versions are the most powerful and therefore are particularly good for larger gardens. Rotary mowers can be either manual or self-propelled with the latter particularly good if you have a big area to mow or you have difficulty pushing a lawnmower. Some are fitted with rear rollers to give your garden the classic striped effect.

Other features include grass collection or mulching with some mowers having the ability to do both. Key electric start is available on selected machines.

Ride on mowers – if you have a large garden or paddock (greater than one tennis court), you should consider a ride on mower. They take all the hard work out of mowing a large area and have become increasingly popular in the last few years. These powerful, high



performance machines have a number of add on features such as the ability to mulch grass, collect grass clipping or do both. They can take a range of attachments– check the features of the models you are interested in. You can also have different levels of comfort from basic to the ultimate in enjoyable mowing experience with some machines having manual transmission whilst others being automatic. Most ride-on mowers are petrol powered with some being powered by diesel. Nearly all are key electric start. As ride-on mowers are the largest machines you will need sufficient indoor space for storage and check also that your mower will fit through your gates and into your shed or garage.

Battery mowers – having almost disappeared in the 1970s, battery mowers are once again gaining popularity. They are the environmentally friendly solution with the added benefits of no starting cord, no power leads, reduced noise and they are easy to maintain. They can handle a typical home lawn.

Things to take into consideration when selecting your mower

Cutting width of mower – the wider the cut the less time you will spend mowing so take this into account when comparing lawn mower features and especially if you have a large area to mow.

Grass collection – if you want a tidy lawn, choose a mower with a grass collection facility. Bear in mind that rear or centrally mounted grass boxes are better than the traditional front mounted grass boxes if you are worried about damaging plant beds or overhanging bushes.

Awkward areas – if you have awkward areas, steep slopes or tight corners that need cutting, then consider buying a trimmer to supplement the capabilities of your mower.

Stripes – if you like stripes on your lawn then choose a mower with a rear roller. As the mower cuts the grass, the roller travels over it and flattens the grass in one direction, which gives the classic stripy effect. The roller also gives you the ability to cut over the edge of the lawn.

BBC – Blade brake clutch or Rotastop. These are terms used for describing the clutch that engages and disengages the blade. This feature is not fitted to all mowers.

OPC – This is a term to describe the “operator presence control” which must be fitted if a BBC is not. This device will cut the engine out once the operator releases the bail arm, e.g. when emptying the grass collector. With a BBC fitted, only the blade will stop and not the engine.

Safety – never use an electric lawnmower in wet weather conditions and always check the socket has RCD protection. Use and store petrol safely.

Lawn mower product wizard

Do you need help to find the right mower?

Answer the following questions (press help if you need explanation) and we'll find the right mower to meet your needs.



How big is your lawn?

- Less than 1/2 tennis court
- Between 1/2 and 1 tennis court
- Greater than 1 tennis court
- Orchard/ Paddock

Does your lawn have slopes or awkward areas?

- Yes
- No
- Help

What type of lawn or grassed area do you have?

- Family lawn
- Formal Lawn
- Orchard/Paddock

Do you prefer your mower to be powered by?

- Mains electric
- Battery
- Petrol

Do you require your mower to be?

- Push
- Self Propelled
- Help

Do you require stripes on your lawn?

- No
- Yes
- No Preference

Do you require your mower to?

- Collect the clippings
- Discharge the clippings
- Mulch or recycle the clippings
- All of the above