

## Lawn Trimmer Buying Guide

### Lawn Trimmers/Strimmers

Lawn trimmers are great for tackling all those jobs around the garden which a lawnmower cannot deal with. A trimmer will cut long grass, weeds and undergrowth, as well as difficult to reach areas such as those around trees, along walls and fences and steep grassy banks. Some trimmers also come with an edger feature, which is great for giving your lawn a neat finish along flowerbeds or pathways.



### What you need to know before selecting your lawn trimmer

**Power** – lawn trimmers or brush cutters can be electric, rechargeable battery or petrol powered.

Electric trimmers are best suited to small to medium sized gardens where accessibility to a power point is not an issue. They are generally fairly lightweight, easy to manipulate and can cope with light to medium duty trimming.

Battery operated trimmers have the benefit of being cordless, but are generally only suited to light use (and therefore smaller gardens) as they have a relatively short run time (30-40 minutes).

Petrol trimmers or brush cutters are suitable for large gardens because they have heavy duty, frequent use cutting power with the added benefit of being cordless and therefore portable. However, they tend to be heavier and bulkier than other machines and are relatively noisy.

Whilst all types of trimmer are referred to as “trimmers”, there is a marked difference in performance between electric/cordless and petrol.

**Trimmer lines** – trimmers have a line of nylon cord attached to the trimmer head and this cuts through grass or other vegetation when it is spun at high speed. A longer line means a broader sweep and therefore the trimmer will cover a larger area more quickly. The length of the line is determined by the power of the machine. The more powerful the unit, the longer the line can be. Some trimmers have double lines to increase their efficiency and power and are especially good at dealing with very overgrown areas. These tend more to be petrol models.

**Replacing the cutting line** – with some models all you have to do when the line is broken is replace it with another one. Some trimmers have an integral spool that either automatically feeds new line when required without interrupting work or alternatively ‘bump’ feeds where all you need to do is tap the head of the machine on the ground and the cord automatically



feeds through. Bump feed heads, or tap and go heads as they are referred to, require the manual reloading of the nylon line.

**Handles** – Most electric, cordless and smaller petrol trimmers have a loop handle arrangement halfway down the handle. This makes it easy to pick up and put down the machine. Larger trimmers and brush cutters may have cow horn handles which are used in conjunction with a harness. The benefit of this type of handle is that it is more comfortable when using the machines for longer periods of time.

If you want a lawn edging facility, ensure that the trimmer you select can accommodate your requirements. There is a new range of products referred to as multi-tool. This is when you buy the power unit with a split shaft and then purchase a range of devices such as trimmer, edger, cultivator, hedge cutter etc to join on to the shaft. They are easy to change and offer greater versatility and value for money when purchasing a few devices.

And don't forget to stock up on replacement trimmer line and 2-stroke oil.

**Safety** – You should wear protective clothing such as goggles, gloves and shoes to protect yourself from flying debris when trimming. When using corded trimmers, use an RCD (Residual Current Device) plug-in adaptor to protect you against accidental cutting of the cable.