

Cuts above the rest

Which? Gardening brings you Best Buy lawnmowers for less than £300

With two poor summers behind us, you may have neglected replacing your battered old lawnmower for a while, but don't worry – the prices seem to be coming down for all types. You can get a good electric mower for £130 and a good petrol mower for £220 – here we highlight a great selection of Best Buys for less than £300.

You can view the full results from *Which? Gardening's* tests of 32 lawnmowers and hand mowers, including seven mowers that are new for this spring, at www.which.co.uk/lawnmowers.

If the thought of long summer days has got you itching to keep your lawn as neat and green as possible, our gardening experts also round up key tips on how to get the best from your mower.

MEMBER OFFER



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Four steps to a fine lawn

Which? Gardening explains how to get a luscious lawn

1 How short to cut

Cut purely ornamental lawns composed of fine grasses to between 12 and 25mm high. Cut little and often, at least weekly, when the grass is growing.

For a typical well-used family lawn, set the mower as close to 25mm as you can, or a little higher. For the first cut of the year, or after a holiday, set the blades even higher, and gradually reduce the height week by week.

In a hot, dry summer, raise the cutting height to around 50mm to avoid stressing the grass.

2 Using clippings

If you leave the grass collector off and let clippings fall into the turf, this will help in times of drought. Do this when you're cutting little and often, but collect up longer clippings.

Some mowers have a mulching option where clippings are cut finely and then blown into the turf. This helps feed the lawn and cut down on chemical fertilisers.

3 Mowing technique

Don't always mow in the same direction – mow at right angles on occasion. Going over the lawn now and



then with a wire rake will lift straggly grass so it can be cut.

4 Keeping it edgy

However good your lawn is, keeping the edges neat will improve its appearance no end. Use old-fashioned edging shears or a grass trimmer every other cut. Once a year, re-cut the edge with a sharp spade or a half-moon edger.

www.which.co.uk Grass trimmers

We publish new test results online every week. This month, we've tested nine trimmers, including the Flymo SabreTrim, so visit www.which.co.uk/grasstrimmers to find out which is best.



Contacts

Bosch 0844 736 0108; www.bosch.co.uk

Brill 029 2079 5888; www.manualmowers.co.uk

Flymo 0870 609 1901; www.flymo.co.uk

Hayter 01279 723444; www.hayter.co.uk

Mountfield 0845 600 3207; www.mountfield-online.co.uk

Best for small gardens Up to 50 square metres

An electric wheeled rotary mower is a safe bet, but you should also consider a hand cylinder mower or hover mower

64% Brill Razorcut Premium 33 £93

Hand cylinder mowers are the greenest option, and they provide gentle exercise. Like all hand mowers, this is best on a frequently cut lawn. We found the grass catcher (an extra £30) easy to use, and the handle folds neatly for storage. The contact-free blades cut without touching, making it quieter than older hand mowers. Cheapest online.

Available Online, independents Cut width 33cm Weight 8kg



WORTH CONSIDERING

Flymo Vision Compact 330 £98

This Flymo was a Best Buy when *Which? Gardening* last tested hover mowers in 2005 – and the Vision Compact model is now more powerful. This hover mower has a grassbox and window so you can

watch it fill up, and a nice feature is the built-in cable reel. Like all hover mowers, this is best on regularly trimmed lawns. Cheapest at Tesco.

Available Argos, Homebase, Tesco, online
Cut width 33cm
Weight 11.7kg



Best for medium gardens 50-150 square metres

The best option is an electric rotary mower – it will cope with occasional tougher tasks as well as the weekly trim

72% Flymo Multimo 360XC £127

This compact mower has all the features you could want, including a built-in cable reel and a cutting height that is easy to change. For a small, light mower, it did well in our tests – even the tougher tasks in long, damp and rough grasses. You can also switch from collecting the clippings to mulching, so grass is recycled back into the lawn. Cheapest at Homebase.

Available Argos, Homebase Cut width 36cm Weight 12.8kg



71% Bosch Rotak 40 £130

This powerful mower coped with long and rough grass in our tests. Its best feature is a combination of inset front wheels and red plastic combs that let you cut right up to a lawn edge. It has a single cutting-height adjuster so all wheels change at once, and a roller for a striped finish. There's also a 34cm version. Cheapest at B&Q.

Available Argos, B&Q, Homebase, online Cut width 40cm Weight 13.2kg

Best for large gardens More than 150 square metres

Petrol rotary mowers are best; for very large lawns, go for one with an engine that drives the wheels as well as the blades

76% Mountfield 461 HP £220

A robust mower with a powerful engine, the Mountfield 461 HP powered through all our tests. It has some great features, including a comfortable switch bar and adjustable handle, which folds neatly for storage. Cutting-height adjusters on each wheel are fiddly, however. Cheapest online.

Available Online Cut width 46cm Weight 25kg



71% Hayter Spirit 41 £229

This is a sleek, robust petrol mower with a plastic deck that's easy to clean. It boasts a comfortable moulded switch bar and an easy-to-use grass bag. Changing the cutting height is easy thanks to a chunky single lever with seven clearly marked positions. When we checked, it was cheapest online.

Available Online Cut width 41cm Weight 29kg