

Gear Up for Spring with Battery-Powered Tools

by Rita Pelczar

POWER TOOLS reduce both the time and effort required for many garden jobs. For home gardeners, tools powered by rechargeable batteries are practical alternatives to gasoline-powered equipment. They usually weigh less, are quieter, and produce no noxious exhaust fumes. On the flip side, they can be less powerful, and their batteries need to be recharged. Many newer designs, however, have been engineered to provide significantly more power and longer run times. Here are a few worth considering:

If you are looking for a tool for a variety of trimming and cutting jobs, the **VonHaus Electric 4 in 1 Cordless Compact Grass Shears Hedge Edge Trimmer** (www.vonhaus.com) may be just the ticket. By changing the heads on the base handle, you get one tool with multiple uses. In addition to grass shears and a hedge trimmer, the tool also comes with a cultivator and garden saw attachments. Switching from one part to another is easy—just remove the bottom plate, snap on the desired tool head, and replace the plate. To get to hard-to-reach places or to avoid bending, attach the aluminum telescopic handle to the base handle to extend it 29 to 50 inches. Snap-on wheels let you roll the tool over the ground at a uniform height when trimming grass. The included 10.8-volt lithium-ion battery is very lightweight and operates for a good 20 minutes before it needs a recharge.

Cutting grass around trees and on sloped terrain can be challenging with a lawn mower, but not with the **Earthwise Cordless Grass Trimmer** from Gardener's Supply Company (www.gardeners.com). The cutting width is adjustable between 13 and 15 inches, and the variable speed trigger allows you to increase the power as needed. I use it to cut back ornamental grasses on a steep bank, and it works like a charm. The included 58-volt



Left: VonHaus Electric 4 in 1 Cordless Compact Grass Shears Hedge Edge Trimmer [shown with grass shears attachment and snap-on wheels]. Above: Earthwise Cordless Grass Trimmer

rechargeable battery gives it a power comparable to a gas string trimmer. And the battery has great endurance on a single charge—much longer than I have!

Raking leaves is tiring work, but a good leaf blower allows you to accomplish that chore in short order without straining your back. Two models that I tested last fall are extremely well built, easy to use, and a lot quieter than my husband's gasoline blower—although just as effective. The **EGO 56-Volt Lithium-Ion Cordless Blower** (www.egopowerplus.com) produces a beefy blast of air simply by squeezing the trigger with your index finger. The air velocity at low speed is 50 mph; at high speed it's 85 mph. If you need an extra blast of power, there is a turbo-boost button conveniently placed in reach of your thumb



that amps the velocity up to 110 mph. Use this option sparingly to maximize the run time of the battery—typically between 20 and 75 minutes, depending on the speed at which you run it. The battery charger is compatible with the batteries of other EGO power tools, which is handy. It has a five-year warranty as long as it was purchased from an authorized dealer such as Home Depot.

I got similarly powerful results from the **Greenworks Pro 60V Brushless Axial Blower** (www.greenworkstools.com), which is slightly louder than the EGO, but it has a variable speed trigger—a feature I really like. It also has a “cruise control” that allows you to set the speed and relax your trigger finger. The tool has an average run time of 45 minutes. Like the EGO, it has



Left, top to bottom: EGO 56-Volt Lithium-Ion Cordless Blower; Greenworks Pro 60V Brushless Axial Blower; 40V MAX* Lithium 12-inch Chainsaw

a turbo boost, which ups the power to 125 mph when you need to move reluctant debris such as wet leaves. The EGO and Greenworks blowers each weighs less than eight pounds, making them easy to handle.

If cutting wood is among your garden tasks, a chainsaw comes in handy, but most gasoline-powered models are quite heavy. At just 8.3 pounds, the **40V MAX* Lithium 12-inch Chainsaw** from Black and Decker (www.blackanddecker.com) is light enough for me to use it with ease, and powerful enough to cut through large branches and fallen limbs. Since this is not a chore I do every day, it's helpful that the battery holds its charge for several months and that it has an automatic oiling system to lubricate the bar and chain. Also available is the smaller **20V MAX* Lithium 10-inch Chainsaw**, which can cut branches up to about three inches in diameter.



Whenever you operate power equipment, wear eye and ear protection and follow any other manufacturers' safety recommendations. When used properly, these products reduce the time and energy required to accomplish many garden tasks, leaving you more time to stroll through the yard and appreciate all your hard work. ♡

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