



Tried & tested *wellingtons*

Geoff Hodge tests a range of gardening boots and wellingtons

WHEN the weather turns wet and cold and you've got jobs to do in the garden, you need a good pair of gardening boots or wellies to keep your feet comfortable, warm and dry.

I usually prefer to wear shoes when

doing general gardening jobs, because I like the flexibility of shoes - especially when kneeling. However, having now carried out this test I think I know why.

My current wellies are quite old (probably 20 years), were dirt cheap and made from quite rigid plastic, with very

little flexibility. Most of those on test were far more flexible and I may now change my opinion - and get some new wellies!

The test

I tested each pair for around two hours. I

was looking at how easy they were to put on and take off, how comfortable they were to wear when digging and when kneeling and how much warmth and rain protection they provided. Only two pairs provided really good warmth insulation, but you can always wear thick

socks if this is an issue!

Like many people, my feet are slightly different and my shoe sizes are: right UK 7½ (Euro 41) and left UK 8 (Euro 42), so I tested size 8s. I have different foot widths, too, but I found most of these boots fitted well.

Town & Country Premium Rubber Wellington Boots £39.99

Traditional natural rubber wellington boots with adjustable leg strap. The longest boots on trial, reaching up to my knees, which gave good leg support and protection.

Available in sizes 4-11 (37-45) and four colours.

Comfort ★★★★★

Very soft and flexible and good fit for both my feet and legs.

Wearability ★★★★★

Very flexible, so they were great for all gardening jobs during the test. The adjustable strap ensured a close, secure fit, making them extremely wearable.

Weather/cold protection ★★★★★

The close fit around my legs ensured a good waterproof seal. Not much warmth insulation.

Value ★★★★★



Town & Country

WIN OUR 'BEST BUY'

We have four pairs of 'Best Buy' Town & Country Premium Rubber Wellington Boots to give away! Send your name and address plus your preferred UK shoe size to Garden News Garden Boots Giveaway, PO Box 57, Coates, Peterborough PE7 2FE or enter online at www.greatcompetitions.co.uk Closing date is December 18. Please write 'do not contact' if you don't want to be contacted by us or by carefully selected partner organisations.

Aigle Bison Boots £65

These half boots have a natural rubber upper with a cotton lining and leather pull-on tab. They were the shortest on test, reaching just below the middle of my calf.

Available in sizes 6½-12 (40-47).

Comfort ★★★★★

Although comfortable, they have a wide opening, resulting in a loose fit around the legs, and they were quite sloppy.

Wearability ★★★★★

Very easy to slip on and off. The wide opening meant that the fit wasn't 100 per cent comfortable when kneeling for long periods.

Weather/cold protection ★★★★★

Due to the wide opening, they didn't prevent rain getting in and didn't provide much warmth insulation.

Value ★★★★★

Supplied by webury.com



Barbour Town and Country Wellingtons £74.95

Traditional wellies made from flexible latex rubber, reaching to just below my knees. Provide good leg protection.

Available in sizes 4-13 (37-48) and nine colours, although not in all sizes.

Comfort ★★★★★

Very comfortable to wear, with a good hard foot base.

Wearability ★★★★★

Easy to slip on and off. Good flexibility when digging and kneeling. The adjustable straps were difficult to adjust for a tight fit around my legs.

Weather/cold protection ★★★★★

Reasonably tight fit around the legs to prevent rain getting in. Not much in the way of warmth insulation.

Value ★★★★★



Gardman All Season Comfort Boots £22.99

These are three-quarter length 'derry' style boots made from PVC and lined with fleece. A toggle tie at the top adjusts the opening.

Available in sizes 5-11 (38-46).

Comfort ★★★★★

These weren't very comfortable to wear. The internal heel reinforcement of ten worked its way under my feet - and they were very tight around my toes.

Wearability ★★★★★

Very easy to slip on and off. They are quite bulky, making kneeling awkward, and are quite heavy.

Weather/cold protection ★★★★★

The fleece lining provided good insulation and warmth. The toggle tie wasn't that easy to adjust and maintain a rainproof fit

Value ★★★★★



Briers Traditional Green PVC Wellington Boots £14.99

These wellies are made from strong, durable PVC and as a result, they are not completely flexible.

Available in sizes 4-12 (37-47).

Comfort ★★★★★

Although comfortable, they have a very wide opening, resulting in a loose fit around the legs.

Wearability ★★★★★

Very easy to slip on and off. The wide opening meant that the fit wasn't 100 per cent comfortable when kneeling.

Weather/cold protection ★★★★★

Due to the wide opening they didn't prevent rain getting in and didn't provide much warmth insulation.

Value ★★★★★



Muck Boot Derwent £64

The Derwent is very flexible, made from neoprene, covered on the foot and ankle areas with reinforced, natural rubber. A good general outdoor boot and only beaten to 'Best Buy' on price - but worth it if you have the money and want the cold protection.

Available in sizes 3-12 (35-47).

Comfort ★★★★★

Extremely comfortable and a good all-round fit.

Wearability ★★★★★

Although they have a close fit, they're still reasonably easy to slip on and off. The close fit and flexible materials meant they were extremely wearable whatever I was doing.

Weather/cold protection ★★★★★

The close fit helps keep rain out and this and neoprene construction keep warmth in and provide excellent insulation against the cold.

Value ★★★★★

Supplied by JC Country



SUPPLIERS: Some suppliers only sell to gardening stores, but you can often buy their products online. **Barbour** 0191 427 4210, www.barbour.com **Briers** 01666 511457, www.briersltd.co.uk **Gardman** 01406 372237, www.gardman.co.uk **JC Country** 01524 791362, www.jccountry.co.uk **Town & Country** 01530 830990, www.townandco.com **webury.com** 08000 836418, www.webury.com