

Garden Products / Lawn rakes



Get your lawns back to scratch

Geoff Hodge tests rakes and scarifiers that will get the job done

THE autumn is an important time for lawns - it's when you can repair damage caused during the rest of the year. One of the most important jobs is scarifying.

Scarification, using a spring-tine or similar rake, removes organic material from around the base of the grass such as dead grass and other debris (thatch) and moss that would otherwise prevent good, dense grass growth. It also tidies up any straggly sideways grass growth.

If you don't scarify, debris builds up and causes other problems; thatch and mossy lawns are not very

wear or drought tolerant, water lies around the grass causing dieback making the grass more susceptible to disease and waterlogging. When you've finished, you should have a big pile of debris.

It's essential that you try out any tool you buy to ensure it's comfortable to use. Check the weight and length of the shaft, because if you're doing anything for a long time you want to make sure you stand upright; bending will put pressure on your spine and result in backache.

Handgrips are also important as you don't want to end up with lots of blisters.

The test

I tested a range of lawn rakes/scarifiers on my lawn.

Generally, the vast majority did an excellent job and there was very little difference between the best. I did find that those with steel tines were slightly better as I could put more pressure on them to scarify thoroughly and deeply.

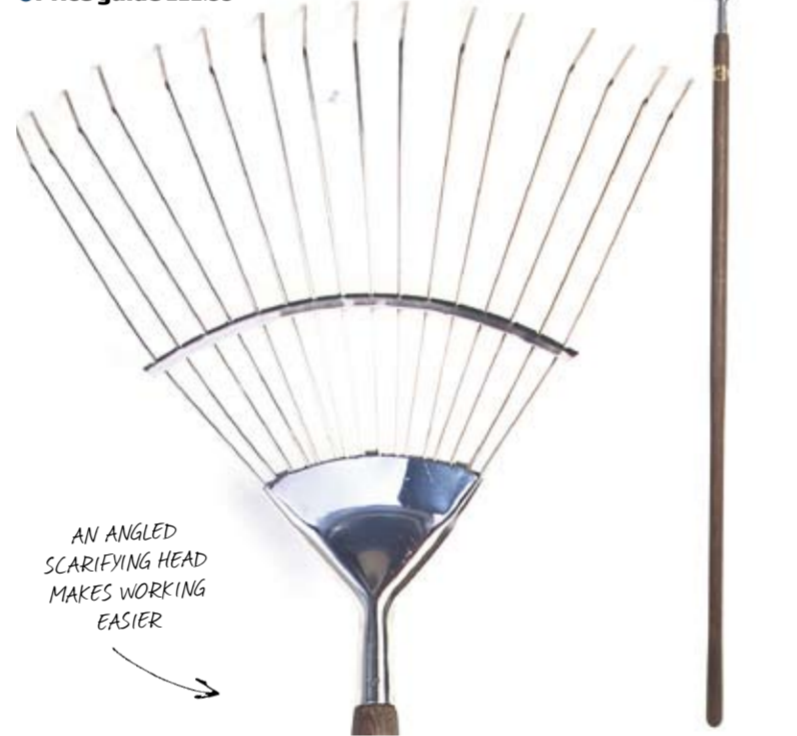
I'm not that tall, 1.73m (5ft 9in), which is pretty average and I found the shorter handled tools too short to use comfortably over a long time as I had to bend when using them.

Joseph Bentley Traditional Stainless Steel Flexo Lawn/Leaf Rake

£22.99

The scarifying head is held at an angle to the handle.

- Length 168cm (66¼in)
- Weight 1.08kg
- Handle contoured oak
- Comfort
- Tines 16 stainless steel tines
- Scarifying width 41cm (16¼in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £22.99



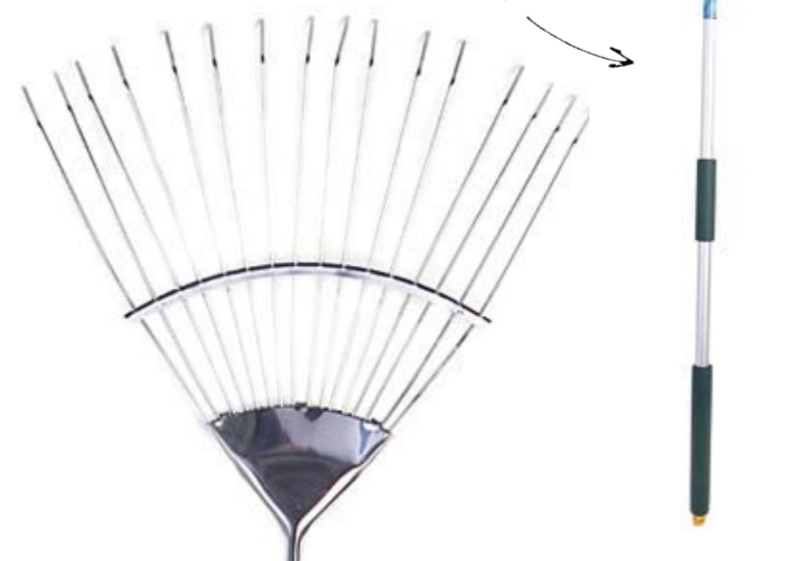
Yeoman Stainless Steel Lawn Rake

£17.99

The scarifying head is held at an angle to the handle.

- Length 167cm (65¼in)
- Weight 963g
- Handle aluminium, ergonomic cranked/angled handle and head
- Grip soft foam top grip, soft foam centre grip
- Comfort
- Tines 16 stainless steel tines
- Scarifying width 42cm (16½in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £17.99

THE LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINIUM HANDLE IS COMFORTABLE TO USE



GN TOP TIP
Save the moss from lawns to use as hanging basket liners or to cover bulbs in pots

Darlac Telescopic Expanding Rake

£9.99

Telescopic handle and variable width head; wide for raking or narrow for clearing beds & borders. More of a leaf rake than a scarifier.

- Length 108-158cm (42½-62¼in)
- Weight 935g
- Handle aluminium
- Grip soft rubber
- Comfort
- Tines 15 flattened-end aluminium tines
- Scarifying width 19-53cm (7½-21in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £9.99



Fiskars Power Lawn Rake

£29.99

- Length 167cm (65¼in)
- Weight 1.1kg
- Handle aluminium
- Grip rubber top grip, plastic centre grip
- Comfort
- Tines 20 aluminium tines
- Scarifying width 57cm (22½in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £29.99



Bulldog Premier Springbok Lawn Rake

£28.14

The heat-treated tines withstand tough use while maintaining their shape and flexibility. They wrap around the rivets on the plate to reduce the chance of becoming detached.

- Length 146cm (57½in)
- Weight 1.28kg
- Handle ash
- Comfort
- Tines 20 powder-coated, heat-treated steel tines
- Scarifying width 48cm (19in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £28.14



Spear & Jackson Neverbend Heavy Duty Lawn Rake

£26.99

The heat-treated tines wrap securely around the rivets on the plate to withstand heavy use and keep their shape and flexibility.

- Length 145cm (57in)
- Weight 1.36kg
- Handle lacquered ash
- Comfort
- Tines 20 heat-treated steel tines
- Scarifying width 49cm (19¼in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £26.99



Gardman Moulton Mill Stainless Steel Lawn Rake

£22.99

- Length 145cm (57in)
- Weight 1.11kg
- Handle ash
- Comfort
- Tines 16 stainless steel tines
- Scarifying width 43cm (17in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £22.99



Draper Expert Stainless Steel Lawn Rake

£18

- Length 169cm (66½in)
- Weight 1.11kg
- Handle lacquered ash
- Comfort
- Tines 16 stainless steel tines
- Scarifying width 44cm (17¼in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £18



This week
Get ready for spring - plant your bedding now **Page 13**

Grow Your Own
With allotment expert Terry Walton **Page 25**



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Interchangeable tools

Most of the tools in my shed are interchangeable types. You buy a single handle that is the right length for you and then the various tool heads you need. This ensures all your tools are the right length for you and they don't take up as much room to store.

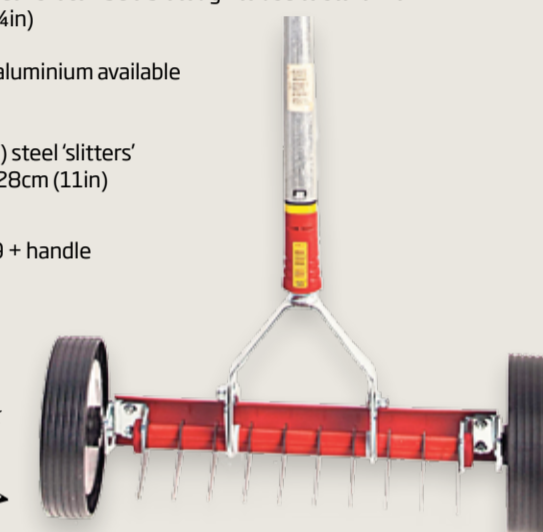
Wolf-Garten Roller Moss Removal Rake

£39.99

Wooden or aluminium handles from 32cm (12½in) £4.99 to 1.7m (5ft 8in) £15.99; I use the 1.5m (5ft) handle. Easy 'snap on' tool heads. Although the heaviest on test, the wheeled head takes the strain. Cultivates very deeply, which means it can be a bit tough to use to start with.

- Length 176cm (69¼in)
- Weight 2.36kg
- Handle wooden or aluminium available
- Grip soft rubber
- Comfort
- Tines 10 6cm (2¼in) steel 'slitters'
- Scarifying width 28cm (11in)
- Scarifying ability
- Price guide £39.99 + handle

THE WHEELED HEAD TAKES THE STRAIN FOR DEEP SCARIFYING WORK

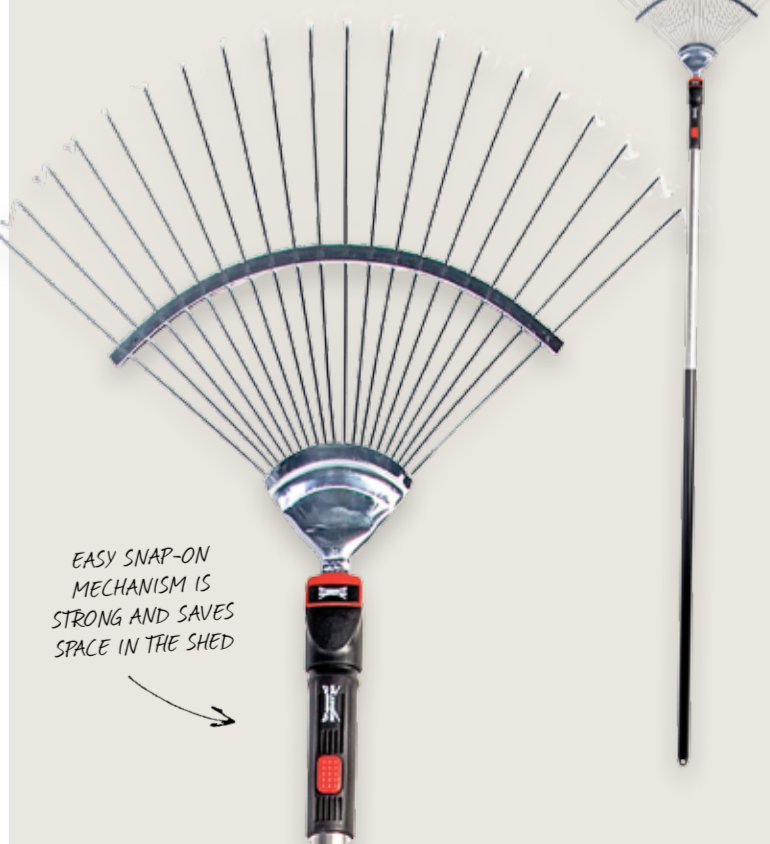


Wilkinson Sword Spring Tine Rake

£24.99

Lightweight aluminium handle and cold rolled steel 'snap on' tool heads. Two handle lengths are available: 1.2m (4ft) £9.99; 1.5m (5ft) £11.99. I use the 1.5m (5ft) handle. The round tines are designed to get debris out of the lawn.

- Length 180cm (71in)
- Weight 1.05kg
- Handle aluminium
- Grip plastic
- Comfort



Suppliers

- Bulldog Tools
01279 401572
www.bulldogtools.co.uk
- Darlac
01753 547790
www.darlac.com
- Draper Tools
02380 494333 for stockist details. www.draper.co.uk
- Fiskars Brands UK,
01656 655595

- www.fiskars.com
- Gardman
01406 372237
www.gardman.co.uk
Supplies direct to garden centres & stores
- Joseph Bentley
01905 798666
www.josephbentley.org.uk
Supplies direct to garden centres & stores
- Spear & Jackson

- 0114 281 4242
www.spear-and-jackson.com
- Wilkinson Sword from E P Barrus
0845 894 1599
wilkinson-sword@barrus.co.uk
- Wolf-Garten from E P Barrus
01869 363636
www.wolf-garten.co.uk
- Yeoman 01905 791984
www.yeomangarden.com
Supplies direct to garden centres & stores