

↘ Tried & tested / Powered scarifiers

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Ideas to brighten up your patio with autumn plants **Page 13**

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↘ AL-KO Comfort 32VLE Combi 1000w Scarifier



A two-in-one lawnrake and scarifier, which can easily be fitted with either the supplied scarifying cassette or the lawnrake cassette. Versatile, with both blade scarifier and spring tine lawnrake cassettes. Easy to use, although the debris collection bag was fiddly to put on.

- **Motor size** 1000 watt
- **Blades or tines** six double blades, lawnrake 10 double spring tines
- **Scarifying width** scarifier 29cm (11in), lawnrake 32cm (13in)
- **Scarifier depth** 5 set depths
- **Ease of depth adjustment** ★★★★★
- **Deck material** plastic
- **Debris collection** 45-litre rear material bag, difficult to put on easily
- **Weight** 12kg
- **Ease of carrying, moving around** ★★★★★
- **Cable length** 12 metres
- **Guarantee** 2 years
- **Price guide** £169

↘ Black & Decker GD300 Lawnraker

This is light and easy to use, manoeuvre and carry around. A perfect choice for the smaller lawn, which isn't strangled by too much thatch or debris.

- **Motor size** 600 watt
- **Blades or tines** 20 triple spring tines
- **Scarifying width** 30cm (12in)
- **Scarifier depths** 3 depths 8mm, 3mm, -2mm
- **Ease of adjustment** ★★★★★
- **Deck material** plastic
- **Debris collection** 30-litre front material bag; filled very quickly
- **Weight** 7kg
- **Ease of carrying, moving around** ★★★★★
- **Cable length** 10 metres
- **Other features** rear roller
- **Guarantee** 2 years
- **Price guide** £75.98



↘ Bosch ALR900 Lawn Raker



Best Buy spring tine machine that was easy to use and the Powerdrive motor produced good results as well as debris collection.

- **Motor size** 900 watt Powerdrive motor provides 'jet collect' system
- **Blades or tines** 10 double spring tines
- **Scarifying width** 32cm (13in)
- **Scarifier depth** 4 depths: 10mm, 5mm, 0, -5mm
- **Ease of adjustment** ★★★★★
- **Deck material** plastic
- **Debris collection** 50-litre rigid rear box; splits for storage
- **Weight** 9.4kg
- **Ease of carrying, moving around** ★★★★★
- **Cable length** 10 metres
- **Guarantee** 2 years
- **Price guide** £109.99

↘ John Deere D31RE Scarifier

A strong, powerful machine with metal blades, producing great results. It was easy to use, especially as the height adjuster switch is on the handle.

- **Motor size** 1400 watt
- **Blades or tines** 13 triple blades
- **Scarifying width** 31cm (12½in)
- **Scarifier depth** infinite down to -3mm
- **Ease of adjustment** ★★★★★
- **Deck material** plastic
- **Debris collection** optional 50-litre rear material bag; £34.95
- **Weight** 17.5kg
- **Ease of carrying, moving around** ★★★★★
- **Cable length** 20 metres
- **Guarantee** 2 years
- **Price guide** £295



↘ Wolf-Garten Electric Scarifier UV34E

The heaviest electric machine, which was somewhat awkward to manoeuvre. It removed lots of thatch; Wolf-Garten recommend not using a collection bag because of the amount of thatch it pulls up.

- **Motor size** 1600 watt
- **Blades or tines** 16 double blades
- **Scarifying width** 34cm (14in)
- **Scarifier depth** infinitely adjustable
- **Ease of adjustment** ★★★★★
- **Deck material** plastic
- **Debris collection** optional 60-litre rear material bag; £32.99
- **Weight** 24kg
- **Ease of carrying, moving around** ★★★★★
- **Cable length** 20m
- **Guarantee** 10 years
- **Price guide** £369



↘ John Deere D38R Scarifier

The most powerful machine, meaning it produced the best results, but at a premium price. Possibly only suitable for those wanting a 'professional' finish.

- **Motor size** petrol, 4 stroke, 2200 watt
- **Blades or tines** 15 x 10 blades
- **Scarifying width** 38cm (15in)
- **Scarifier depth** infinite down to -5mm
- **Ease of adjustment** ★★★★★
- **Deck material** aluminium
- **Debris collection** optional 55-litre rear material bag; £73
- **Weight** 33kg
- **Ease of carrying, moving around** ★★★★★
- **Guarantee** 2 years
- **Price guide** £915



↘ Joseph Bentley Traditional Stainless Steel Flexo Lawn/Leaf Rake

- **Length:** 168cm (66¼in)
- **Weight:** 1.08kg
- **Handle:** contoured oak
- **Comfort:** ★★★★★
- **Tines:** 16 stainless steel tines
- **Scarifying width:** 41cm (16¼in)
- **Scarifying ability:** ★★★★★
- **Price guide:** £24.99



Suppliers

- AL-KO**
01963 828055
www.alkogarden.co.uk
- Black & Decker**
01753 567055
www.blackanddecker.co.uk
- Bosch**
08447 360108
www.bosch-pt.co.uk
- John Deere**
0800 085 2522
www.deere.co.uk
- Joseph Bentley**
01905 798666
www.josephbentley.org.uk
Supplies direct to garden centres & stores
- Wolf-Garten**
0845 270 7603
www.wolf-garten.co.uk

WIN OUR 'BEST BUY' WORTH £590

We have two of the John Deere Best Buy scarifiers to give away! Send your name and address to Garden News Scarifier Giveaway, PO Box 57, Coates, Peterborough PE7 2FE or enter online at www.greatcompetitions.co.uk

Closing date is October 4. Please write 'do not contact' if you don't want to be contacted by us or by carefully selected partner organisations.

JOHN DEERE
www.deere.co.uk

Getting lawns up to scratch...

Geoff Hodge tests powered lawn rakes and scarifiers to help get lawns back in good nick - easily!

SCARIFYING is one of the most important autumn lawn jobs. Scarification removes organic material from around the base of the grass, such as dead grass and other debris (thatch) and moss that would otherwise prevent strong, dense 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 and making the grass more susceptible to disease

and waterlogging. If you've done the job properly, the lawn should look like it has had a right 'going-over'!

This time last year, I tested hand lawn rakes/scarifiers and the Best Buy was the Joseph Bentley Traditional Stainless Steel Flexo Lawn/Leaf Rake. Now there's no doubt that a good spring-tine scarifying rake will do a fantastic job - if you have a small lawn and the muscle power and inclination to use one. However, on a large lawn or where body or mind aren't up to using one, a powered machine has to be the

best bet if you want to do the job, quickly easily and without exhausting yourself.

I tested five electric scarifiers/lawnrakes and one petrol - perfect for those with really big lawns or who want a professional job. What's the different between a scarifier and a lawnrake? Good question! But generally scarifiers have solid metal blades and lawnrakes have spring tines. However, they both scarify - getting rid of thatch and other rubbish - so I wouldn't worry too much about the terminology!

The test

I tested a range of powered lawn rakes/scarifiers - five electric and one petrol - and a good old-fashioned rake on a lawn that was full of moss and thatch and hadn't been scarified for five years. All the machines did an excellent job and there was little difference between them.

Obviously, the bigger the motor, the more power it has, so the better it is equipped for digging into the thatch/the top of the soil. Having said that, even Black & Decker's smaller

600 watt motor was surprisingly good at removing huge amounts of debris.

Metal blades are naturally stronger and more powerful at removing debris than the spring tines, are able to penetrate deeper and probably tolerate more wear and tear.

The overall Best Buy went to the John Deere D31RE Scarifier; the Bosch ALR900 Lawn Raker was the Best Buy for machines with spring tines.