

↘ Tried & tested / Ratchet secateurs and loppers

GN TOP TIP
Shred your prunings before adding them to your compost heap to rot down

Summer bulbs
Start planning your summer display now **Page 13**

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↘ Bosmere Ratchet Secateur

£12.99

- Aluminium alloy handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 2cm (¾in)
- ☉ **Other features** Finger guard; built-in blade oil wipe; jaws with gripping teeth



↘ Bulldog Tools Premier Ratchet Secateurs

£12.66

- Aluminium alloy handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 2cm (¾in)
- ☉ **Other features** Finger guard; built-in blade oil wipe



↘ Burgon & Ball Ratchet Pruner

£17.95

- Aluminium alloy handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** up to 2.5cm
- ☉ **Other features** Finger guard



↘ CK Tools Ratchet Action Power Pruner

£28.99

- Light, plastic handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 2cm (¾in)



↘ Darlac Super Classic Ratchet Pruner

£14.99

- Aluminium alloy handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 2.5cm (1in)



↘ Draper 190mm Anvil Pattern Ratchet Action Secateur

£4.25

- Very light, plastic handles.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 1.9cm (¾in)



↘ Gardman Ratchet Secateurs

£9.99

- Aluminium alloy handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 1.5cm (½in)
- ☉ **Other features** Jaws with gripping teeth



↘ Spear & Jackson Razorsharp Ratchet Anvil Secateurs

£18.49

- Lightweight aluminium body with non-slip soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 2cm (¾in)
- ☉ **Other features** Finger guard



↘ Yeoman Easy Cut Ratchet Secateurs

£13.49

- Light, plastic handles with soft grip.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting width** 1.5cm (½in)
- ☉ **Other features** Finger guard; built-in blade oil wipe; wrist loop



Suppliers

- ☉ **Bosmere**
01293 586200
www.bosmere.com
- ☉ **Bulldog Tools**
01279 401572
www.bulldogtools.co.uk
- ☉ **Burgon & Ball**
0114 233 8262
www.burgonandball.com
- ☉ **CK Tools**
01758 701070
www.ck-tools.com
- ☉ **Darlac** 01753 547790
www.darlac.com
- ☉ **Draper Tools**
02380 266355
www.draper.co.uk
- ☉ **Gardman**
01406 372237
www.gardman.co.uk
- ☉ **Supplies direct to garden centres & stores**
- ☉ **Spear & Jackson**
0114 281 4242
www.spear-and-jackson.com
- ☉ **Yeoman**
01905 791984
www.yeomangarden.com
- ☉ **Supplies direct to garden centres & stores**

↘ Loppers

Obviously, loppers are more suited for cutting through larger branches and the length of the handle gives more leverage to make cuts easier. All five models worked very well.

↘ Bulldog Evergreen Compound Loppers (extending handles)

£29.08

- Lightweight extending aluminium handles and non-stick, high carbon steel blade.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting height** 65.5-99.5cm (25¼-39in); in six preset heights
- ☉ **Blade type** bypass
- ☉ **Cutting width** 4.5cm (1¾in)
- ☉ **Weight** 1.59kg
- ☉ **Grip** soft plastic



↘ Darlac Handy Ratchet Lopper

£17.95

- As the name suggests, very handy with tough, lightweight nylon fibreglass handles. Curved anvil helps grip branches.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting height** 39cm (15¼in)
- ☉ **Blade type** anvil
- ☉ **Cutting width** 3.5cm (1¾in)
- ☉ **Weight** 485g
- ☉ **Grip** plastic



↘ Yeoman Advanced Ratchet Lopper

£25.49

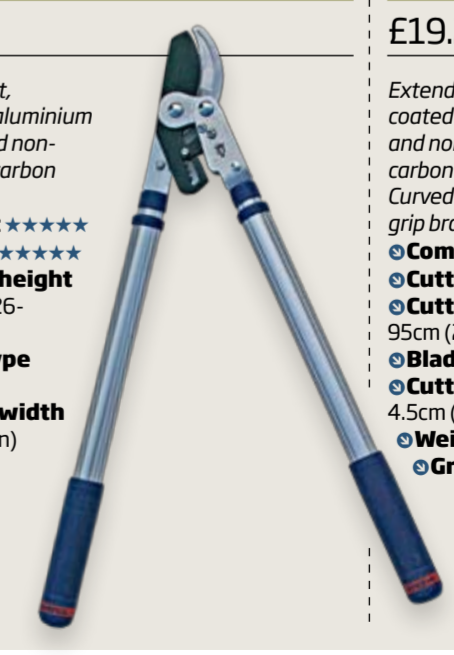
- Tough, lightweight nylon fibreglass handles. Curved anvil helps grip branches.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting height** 52.5cm (20¾in)
- ☉ **Blade type** anvil
- ☉ **Cutting width** 2.5cm (1in)
- ☉ **Weight** 640g
- ☉ **Grip** soft plastic



↘ Spear & Jackson Razorsharp Telescopic Ratchet Bypass Lopper

£37.49

- Lightweight, extending aluminium handles and non-stick, high carbon steel blade.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting height** 66-98cm (26-38½in)
- ☉ **Blade type** bypass
- ☉ **Cutting width** 4.5cm (1¾in)
- ☉ **Weight** 1.61kg
- ☉ **Grip** soft plastic



↘ Draper Expert Telescopic Anvil Pattern Ratchet Action Loppers

£19.25

- Extending, powder-coated steel handles and non-stick, high carbon steel blade. Curved anvil helps grip branches.
- ☉ **Comfort** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting** ★★★★★
- ☉ **Cutting height** 64-95cm (25¼-37½in)
- ☉ **Blade type** anvil
- ☉ **Cutting width** 4.5cm (1¾in)
- ☉ **Weight** 1.76kg
- ☉ **Grip** plastic



Personal choice

Geoff Hodge tests a range of ratchet secateurs and loppers

WE ALL have our preferences for secateurs - they're a very personal purchase.

When buying a pair, it's always a good idea to try them first - hold them to see how they feel in the hand. Are they comfortable? How heavy are they? Is your hand large enough to hold both handles when fully open?

However some people, especially those with weak wrists or fingers, can have problems cutting through dense or thick wood. Gardeners who suffer from arthritis or similar issues have even more to deal with. That's where ratchet pruners come in.

Each cut is made in three or more stages/squeezes of the handles and as the ratchet locks up another notch; each subsequent squeeze creates greater force as the blade cuts through the branch. The gearing mechanism significantly increases the force exerted, while minimising the amount of effort needed.

The test

I tested both secateurs and loppers on a range of different wood types - including live branches and dead wood. All the models cut well, within their maximum cutting width. I'm sure some blades would blunt sooner than others, but as this wasn't a long-term test

I couldn't check.

As comfort is an issue, especially when doing a lot of pruning, I tested how long I could use them without discomfort or aches. Overall, the most comfortable and my favourite secateurs were those with soft and contoured or moulded handles. With loppers, weight is also a big issue, especially if you are pruning above head height and have weak wrists.

All the secateurs tested feature an anvil blade. The loppers have either anvil or bypass blades; bypass tend to cut live wood more cleanly.

All models tested feature high-carbon steel, non-stick coated blades.