

Everything You Need To Know About Pole Saws



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A pole saw simply is a saw attached to the end of the pole. This saw can be manual or powered by electricity, gas and even batteries.

Most home owners rate pole saws as versatile garden equipment. You can go for a manual saw or gas, electricity powered pole saw depending on your budget and of course, personal liking.

Some people confuse pole saws with pole pruners. Well, pole pruners are slightly different as they have loppers at the end of the pole.

Honestly pole saws are as interesting as they sound. If you are trying to prune branches that are really high, a pole saw would eliminate the need to run back and forth to catch a ladder.

Well, the idea of a chain saw attached at the end of the pole seems odd at first, but once you start using pole saws, you would know why it is a very handy addition to your list of garden tools.

How do Pole Saws work? What are the different types of pole saws? How do you make your investment last longer? Continue reading to find out more.



What Are The Different Types Of Pole Saws?

Below we will explain the difference between types of pole saws.

Battery Cordless Pole Saw

Cordless pole saws powered by rechargeable batteries can be your best bet if you want to prune few trees with large branches. These pole saws are not as powerful as electric or gas powered models, but they do a decent job.

The good thing about battery pole saws is that you no longer have to deal with the inconvenience of power cables running all over your working space. Similarly battery pole saws ensure that you get the work done regardless of gas or electricity availability.

As stated earlier, cordless pole saws run on rechargeable batteries make **the least noise**. When fully charged, the battery should give you at least an hour of uninterrupted branch pruning and cutting.

Cordless pole saws normally have shorter cutting bar length. The batteries used to power the equipment are either lithium ion or nickel-cadmium; lithium ion models as you can guess have a longer life.

Furthermore, lithium ion batteries offer exceptionally well and the performance of the unit is not affected even if the battery discharges with use.



Other than the routine chain sharpening, your cordless battery pole saw requires **little maintenance**. Because the units have shorter bar lengths, they are portable and can be used anywhere. 6" to 8" bar lengths are ideal for most branch cutting tasks.

For best results, look for cordless pole saws powered by Lithium-Ion battery. Models with lithium ion batteries offer better performance and the efficiency of the unit does not suffer even when the battery loses its charge.

Electric Pole Saws

Most garden owners prefer to use electric pole saws because they are the **easiest to use**. All you have to do is connect the unit to a power source and away you go.

Electric pole saws are more powerful than the battery, cordless versions. Cutting blade lengths go up to 10" and the unit is considerably lightweight. Interestingly electric pole saws are the **lightest pole** saws available out there.

Unlike cordless units, electric pole saws do not feel heavy as there is no battery. They also require minimum maintenance to keep the cutting blade running strong and ideal for small trimming tasks.



It is recommended that you buy an electric pole saw with blades of 6" - 10". If you talk about bar length, a unit that is 10" is best.

It's not surprising that electric pole saws can only be used when you have a power source nearby. Even if you don't have a direct power source, you can plug the electric pole saw into an extension unit and you will be trimming trees.c

Electric pole saws are popular because they are light-weight and versatile. The only downside is that their use is restricted in wet weather.

Gas Powered Pole Saws

Gas powered pole saws are the most powerful pole saws available out there. They are more powerful and efficient than both electric and cordless battery models. Because gas models have increased power, they also offer several advantages over electric and battery models

One of the biggest advantages of gas powered pole saws is that they have **increased cutting bar length** and pruning and cutting abilities are also better. The models are designed to offer exceptional performance and tend to last longer.

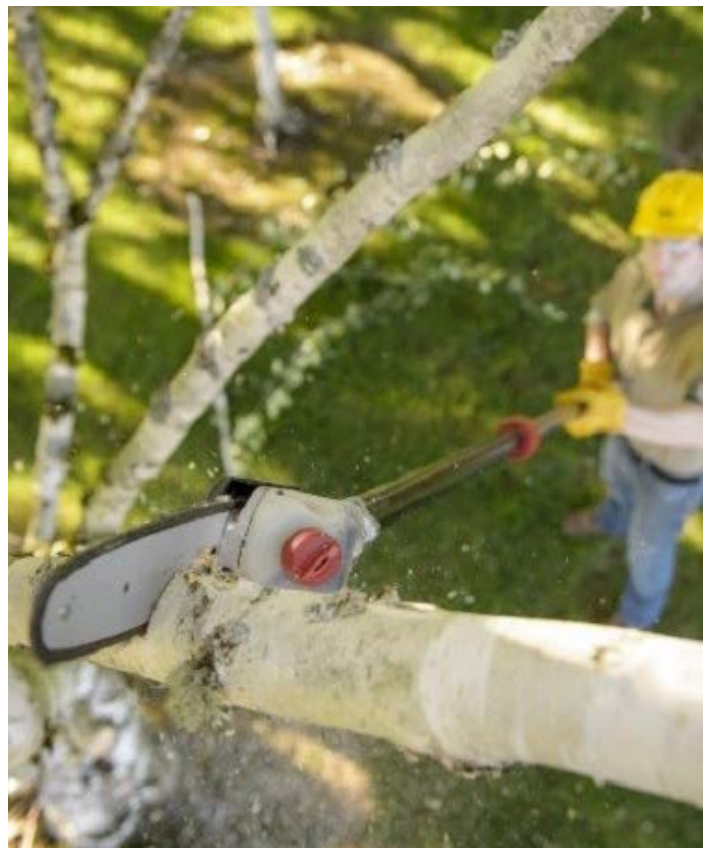
Not all gas powered models are too heavy; however they do weigh more than battery powered and electric pole saws.

The cutting bar length of gas powered pole saws goes up to 12" and this feature makes them a useful investment especially if you have a large garden area to maintain with lots of trees.

Gas powered units are **portable** and have longer shafts so you can trim the tallest trees while keeping your feet firmly on the ground. If you have a closer look at a gas powered unit, you would find that it has heavy-duty bars and chains to cut the biggest and thickest branches.

It's not difficult to guess that gas powered pole saws are designed to cut bigger stuff and offer the pinnacle of performance. Even though the units are slightly heavier than electric and battery models, they are still easy to maneuver and operate.

The only downside is that gas powered models create lots of noise. Yes, they are the noisiest pole saws.



A Word Of Caution

If you are thinking about pruning branches and woods, you would want to get hands on your favorite pole saw.

However, there are a few things that you need to keep in mind. Branches and woods are heavy and dropping wood uncontrolled can hurt you as well as those with you in the working territory.

Ideally pole saws should be used to cut branches up to a couple of inches thick. Remember, the thicker the wood, the more cautious you need to be with your approach.

Don't forget to check out the section on how to use pole saws later in this post to know more about how you should use a pole saw for best results.

Needless to say, you need to be careful while using gas powered pole saws that are heavy. Most importantly, never work on braches that are too close to power lines.

Pole Saw Features You Should Consider

How do you select the best pole saw? This section lists the important features you should consider before making a final decision.

1. Have a look at the **power source**. Gas powered pole saws have the most power to cut through tree branches. Electric pole saws are an excellent choice if you have a power source in your garden. If you don't have the option of using an extension cord or a generator, you can go for a battery powered cordless pole saw or even a gas model.
2. The **length of the cutting blade** also needs to be of sufficient length.
3. The **length of the pole** is another important consideration. Electric and battery powered pole saws have decent pole length however they can fall on the shorter side if you are trying to get rid of tall tree branches.
4. **Weight of the pole** saw perhaps is the most important consideration. Electric pole saws weigh about 12 lbs and can be easily moved around. Gas powered units are powerful and more efficient, but they are not light. Simply put, they can prove very tiring to work with especially if you are holding them for extended periods of time.

5. You also need to look at the amount of maintenance your pole saws requires. As stated earlier battery powered and electric pole saws require minimum maintenance. Gas powered machines can be a hassle at times as they require most care and maintenance.



Some modern pole saws come with detachable heads which means you can use them as a traditional chainsaw

Does Pole Length Make A Difference?

You would find that poles attached to the chain saw head come in various lengths. These poles can be made of steel or other material such as fiberglass. Some pole saws have a single length pole and there are models that come with extendable or adjustable poles.

The length of the pole is an important factor, however longer poles are not always recommended. Simply put, if the pole is long, your unit would have a higher price and it would also become cumbersome to use.



If the tallest branch in your garden doesn't exceed 10", there's no point in buying a pole saw having a pole length of 15".

Most garden owners prefer to buy models with adjustable pole – a pole that can be extended is a blessing if you want to store your pole saw or take it along.

Extendable poles also make it easier to work on higher branches. Remember, you need to look at pole length and not pole reach.

Cutting Bar Length

Cutting bar length is usually expressed in inches and refers to the length of the cutting bar. Most cutting bars are 8" long and you would also find a variety of other sizes.

Longer cutting bars are effective for even the thickest branches. If you're looking for a pole saw, make sure you choose a bar length that is greater than the thickest branches in your garden.

As you can guess, the longer the cutting-bar length, the more power you need to provide to drive the chain. Battery powered models have shorter cutting bars. On the other hand, gas pole saws have the longest bars and they are the most efficient as well.

Are Pole Saws Noisy?

Well, battery powered cordless units and electric pole saws are relatively quieter and your neighbors are less likely to wake up. The gas powered models are tougher and can work on the thickest branches, so they can be a little noisy.

Do I need To Use A Ladder?

Well, a pole saw can reach all of the desirable places. However sometimes you might need to climb a ladder in order to trim branches.

How Should I Use A Pole Saw?

If a thick branch needs to be cut and you can't reach it easily from the ground, you have three obvious choices. You can either grab a ladder to start pruning or call in a professional. Most garden owners these days decide to go for the third option i.e. a pole saw.

While pole saws are one of the most efficient garden tools, you need to use them correctly and more importantly safely to make pruning more effective.

Remember that working on branches can be dangerous, and if this is the first time you are using a pole saw, make sure you are following the guidelines.

Once you have decided that pruning is the job you should be attempting yourself, you should take the necessary safety precautions and clear the work area.

Yes, the area below the branch you are working on needs to be clear. Not to forget, you should be able to move quickly and safely just in case something goes wrong.



- ✓ Decide the spot where you will need to start. If you are trying to remove a thick single branch, you should try to make a couple of horizontal cuts to make your task easier. Also, take notes of the obstacles you are unable to move such as exposed roots.
- ✓ When making the cut, start from the top side of the branch. Remember, working against gravity or working from underneath the branch is more physically tiring.
- ✓ Use both hands to position the saw and pause for a couple of seconds so that you are able to control the pole saw's weight. Now slowly move closer to the desired cutting spot and begin cutting.
- ✓ It is important that you hold the tool at chest level, not above it or below it. Your pole saw should be at an angle while you cut the branch, not directly up or down. If you have an adjustable pole, you might need to adjust its length so that it is most comfortable.
- ✓ The first strokes should always be slow and in control. Your primary goal at this point is to create a groove so that you can move to deeper, faster strokes.
- ✓ Sometimes your pole saw will tend to slip sideways if the branch is sloped. If this is the case, stop the unit, reposition the saw and continue again.
- ✓ Once the saw is in the groove, you can increase the speed and intensity of the cuts. Keep a close eye on the branch. As it nears point of falling, make sure you can move safely if you need to.
- ✓ Last, clean up your work area and remove the fallen move before you move on to the next cut. Yes, you need to clear the working area before moving to the next cut so that you don't fall over.

You should inspect your pole saw before and after use. The chain needs to be checked for obvious signs of wear and tear and missing teeth.

As you can guess, the chain of your pole saw should be oiled properly so that it doesn't break during operation. Most modern pole saws have an automatic oiler.

You should always follow the manufacturer's instructions to make sure the equipment is working optimally.

Safety Gear

It's always a good idea to get basic safety gear for yourself before you decide to use the pole saw. You don't need to buy fancy safety gear. Instead, invest in a good **pair of goggles** to keep the sawdust particles out of your eyes.

You can also buy a **pair of safety gloves** as they ensure better grip. Not to forget, safety gloves also provide extra protection to your hands.

When you are out in the garden, it's a good idea to wear closed shoes or boots with good grip. Boots are especially useful if you have to climb a ladder to reach higher branches.

Always wear well fitted trousers, long sleeves t-shirt and a cap or hat to give your own self extra coverage from falling branches and flying debris.

Last, having a dust mask is also handy as it prevents sawdust from entering your airways. A dust mask is important if you will be working with a pole saw for an extended period of time.



Using Your Pole Saw Safely For The First Time

- ✓ Survey the garden area you will be trimming. Make sure there are no obstructions or power lines nearby.
- ✓ Before you turn on your pole saw, make sure your footing is secure. If the area is rocky or muddy, place a large flat piece of wood so that you have a secure place to stand.
- ✓ Once the equipment starts running, don't put your hands near the blade.
- ✓ As stated earlier, the best way to cut branches is to keep your pole saw at a 45 degree angle. Not only this will reduce the effort needed to hold the equipment but you can also keep a safe distance from the falling branches.
- ✓ Make sure you slowly pull the blade across the top of the branch you want to cut. Once you get into the groove, i.e. are halfway through, grip the handle tightly and switch to deeper, more powerful strokes.
- ✓ If your hands or feet start getting tired, take a break. You can resume your pruning tasks after a 10 to 20 minute break.

Why You Should Buy A Pole Saw

Here are just a few reasons why you should invest in a pole saw:

- + There are three main types of pole saws available – electric, battery powered and gas powered units. All three types of pole saws help you take on tiring jobs such as tree trimming more efficiently.
- + Pole saws are convenient and can be used to trim higher branches without having to climb large trees.
- + Interestingly if you love trees and want to keep your garden in top shape, a pole saw can take care of all your garden needs and give your space the much needed professional manicured look.
- + These small chain saws can help you trim lots of trees with minimum effort. The gas powered units are most powerful and heavy-duty type. If you need to operate your unit for long hours to cut thick branches, gas pole saws can be your best bet.

- + Electric Pole Saws are an excellent choice for small yards. They are easy to operate and do not require a great deal of maintenance.

Make Your Investment Last Longer With Pole Saw Maintenance Tips

The following simple steps will ensure that your pole saw remains functional for many years to come:

- Look for loose screws, nuts and bolts and fix them as soon as possible if needed.
- Scan for obvious signs of damage and wear and tear before starting your pruning task. Check your equipment again once you're done.
- Cutting bar should always be sharp before using.
- If you prefer to tighten the chain before operation, make sure you loosen it a bit after you're done. Also, you should never tighten the chain more than what is needed. As the pole saw cools after operation, your unit can be damaged if the chain is too tight.
- After each use, clean your equipment and store it securely.

How You Should Store Your Pole Saw

Like other garden equipment, pole saws should be stored in a safe place. Needless to say, the unit should never be kept in damp surroundings.

The chain oil has a tendency to seep when the equipment is not in use so make sure you choose the storage conditions wisely. If you don't plan to use the pole saw for a long time, store it **in a well ventilated place.**

Remember that pole saws are sharp and they can be quite dangerous. Consider locking the unit to prevent damage and unauthorized use.

Conclusion

If you're going to be working with a pole saw on a daily basis, this post will help you get familiar with the basics. To know which type of pole saw would be right for you, don't forget to check out our buying guide.