



GEOFF HODGE

Tools for THE JOB

Writer, TV & radio broadcaster and product guru

Leaf rakes

Geoff tests four rakes that make short work of gathering all those autumn leaves

Leaf rakes, with plastic heads, are the best tools for clearing up fallen leaves that can make your garden look a mess in autumn, damaging or killing the lawn if left in place and making hard surfaces into slippery accident hazards. They're also the best tool for lightly raking the lawn before mowing and for picking up grass clippings.



Gather and remove leaves easily with these essential autumn tools

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BEST SMALL LEAF RAKE

1 Draper Tools 550mm Head Plastic Leaf Rake 31069 £7.96

This rake is perfect for smaller areas, where there isn't a huge build-up of leaves, or in tight spaces that its 55cm (1¾ft) wide head can access. Despite being the shortest on test, with a working height of 1.45m (4¾ft), it was still long enough for me to use comfortably. It was also the lightest, at just 430g (15oz). Ash shaft and 23 tines.

- Quality ★★★★★
- Performance ★★★★★
- Comfort ★★★★★
- Value for money ★★★★★

Supplier Draper Tools, 02380 494333, www.draper-tools.com.

2 Spear & Jackson Elements Plastic Leaf Rake £22.99

The 24 tough, but flexible, tines were great for removing leaves from all surfaces – lawn, soil and gravel path. The 55cm (1¾ft) wide head provided good balance, and the soft-feel plastic grip ensured it was really comfortable to use, providing extra grip with wet hands. The ash handle gives a working height of 1.59m (5¼ft) and it weighs 838g (29½oz).

- Quality ★★★★★
- Performance ★★★★★
- Comfort ★★★★★
- Value for money ★★★★★

Supplier Spear & Jackson, 0114 281 4242, www.spear-and-jackson.com.

BEST LEAF RAKE

3 Kent & Stowe Ultimate Leaf Rake £9.99

While this rake didn't perform any better than the others, at this price you really can't go wrong! The ash shaft screws into the rake head, which measures 75cm (2½ft) wide and features 30 very springy tines, making it good on hard and delicate surfaces. Working height is 1.71m (5½ft) and it weighs 825g (29oz).

- Quality ★★★★★
- Performance ★★★★★
- Comfort ★★★★★
- Value for money ★★★★★

Supplier Kent & Stowe, 01480 443753, www.kentandstowe.com.

4 Fiskars Leaf Rake XL £27.26

The heaviest tested at 1.25kg (44oz), mainly because of its large, 63cm (2ft) wide head featuring 27 rigid tines, and 1.74m (5¾ft) working height, chunky ash shaft. But it's well balanced, comfortable to use and excellent at removing leaves that are either wet or well stuck to any hard surfaces.

- Quality ★★★★★
- Performance ★★★★★
- Comfort ★★★★★
- Value for money ★★★★★

Supplier Fiskars UK, 01782 204141, www.fiskars.co.uk.

