



Miniature Chainsaws

Posted by [Brittany Kordick](#)
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[Brittany Kordick](#)
[Miniature Chainsaws](#)

Registered: 4 years ago
Posts: 209

January 04, 2022 06:28PM

Can anybody out there recommend a mini chainsaw they like specifically for pruning? We find that we waste a lot of time and energy making large cuts with hand-saws during pruning season, either because it's not convenient to get our chainsaw or, most often, it's just too tight to get a normal chainsaw in to make a clean cut. This past year, a friend who works on Christmas tree farms recommended we get a mini Stihl saw, which is what he's accustomed to using to cut Christmas trees for customers on demand. They're really lightweight and easy to tote around with you, and convenient to fire up for a single cut here and there.

We're finally getting around to looking at ordering a mini chainsaw, and we're kind of overwhelmed by all the choices available now that mini battery-powered saws have become a big thing, with prices and capabilities all over the map. So far, I'm liking the KIMO 6" battery-powered chainsaw, but I can't quite get myself to commit to yet another power tool with a dedicated battery pack to keep track of. We already have tons of DeWalt stuff, so a DeWalt saw that could run off the same battery is tempting, even if their version of a mini chainsaw is larger than we'd like, as well as pricier.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC
Zone 7a

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/04/2022 06:44PM by Brittany Kordick.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Eliza Greenman](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

Registered: 9 years ago
Posts: 23

January 04, 2022 06:42PM

I have nothing to say about mini chainsaws, but I'll share what I use.

I absolutely love my electric stihl 12" bar chainsaw. I've never had a problem going all day with 2 batteries in the dead of winter (ive had these batteries since 2016). Yes, they are expensive... but no gas, no maintenance other than chain sharpening and adding bar oil. Way more quiet, cuts off after you let go of the trigger. I'll never go back to my arborist sized gas Stihl chainsaw. With that said, I rarely have a problem getting in there with a 12" bar.

I've also gone battery powered for pruners. I have [these](#) and they cut really fast with little effect on my hands or elbows. I use them 100% of the time when pruning small stuff and I can't recommend them enough. I have repetitive use injury from pruning like a fool over the years and using 90 year old tools.

With all that said, I'd love to hear feedback on the mini chainsaw. I don't see myself adding it to my arsenal, as I prefer to sharpen a blade over a chain, but I'm interested none the less

Mid-Atlantic VA, Zone 7a

(And often representing other areas throughout the South)

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[James Smith](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

Registered: 2 years ago
Posts: 57

January 04, 2022 09:51PM

Indeed, I may. I recently purchased a Milwaukie Hatchet. All of my chainsaws are Stihl, and I highly recommend the brand. However, after watching this comparison video, I chose the Milwaukie Hatched over the Stihl G26. As stated in the video, the Stihl is a one trick pony with the battery, the Milwaukie will power countless tools. However not a great advantage to me yet as all my cordless Milwaukie tools are powered with the M18. But if I add down the line, I have the M12 batteries available, and I didn't need a charger as the ones I have charge both the M12 and M18 batteries. The automatic oiler is obviously a much better feature than having to carry around a bottle of oil.

A nice benefit of the Hatchet over a standard chain saw is you can safely operate it with one hand. It does have a handle if you need it, however it is perfect for holding the branch that is being cut with your free hand, thereby preventing it from falling and tearing the bark. It weighs less than a standard saw, so a bit kinder on old, tired arms.

The only drawback is it is a bit awkward to push the safety toggle with your thumb while triggering with your finger. It is doable but requires more effort than I like. It is much easier, and probably by design, to use the handle and push with that thumb while triggering with your other hand,

however that defeats one hand operation. I can see it would be rather easy to tape the switch so it is overridden, not something I have a problem with, but the safety conscious individual might object.

As I already had a charger, I bought the unit as a standalone and then purchased two 6.0 batteries, which should give me a longer run time than the 3.0 batteries used in the video. As of yet I have not put it to rigorous use, but when I do, I'll update the thread with my opinion of its performance.

Here is the link to the video comparison: [www.youtube.com]

I also suggest doing a YouTube search of 'Milwaukie Hatchet' to see other videos of it in action.

If you have any questions, please ask.

Best,

James

Washington Okanogan Valley
Zone 6b

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/05/2022 02:44AM by James Smith.

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[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 05, 2022 12:27AM

Registered: 4 years ago
Posts: 209

Hey James,

What a coincidence! After poring over the possibilities and re-assessing today, I had all but decided to go with the Milwaukee Hatchet, which had not previously been on my radar, so I'm thrilled to know you've got one and so far, so good. I had also considered the Stihl GTA 26, but the consensus seems to be that the battery does not last long at all, and also, it's a bit pricey for not being hugely versatile. Thanks very much and looking forward to probably comparing notes on the Milwaukee as the season progresses!

Brittany

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/05/2022 02:37AM by Brittany Kordick.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[James Smith](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 05, 2022 02:56AM

Registered: 2 years ago
Posts: 57

I neglected to mention that there is an alternative. It is the Milwaukie Hackzall, basically a one handed sawzall. There are pruning blades available, so you can use it for one handed sawing. It is slower than the Hatchett, but it does have a narrower kerf. It also can be fitted with any blade that fits a sawzall, making it more versatile, for example I have used it to saw a PVC mainline in the ground to make a repair. If one had a small orchard it might make more sense if you could only have one saw. Whereas a large orchard would lean towards the Hatchett for speed.

Washington Okanogan Valley

Zone 6b

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Claude Jolicoeur](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 05, 2022 03:08AM

Registered: 11 years ago
Posts: 226

Interesting discussion...

For my part, I prefer a manual saw for up to 3" limbs. I recently bought a mega hand saw that is more than 4 ft long - the blade is 24" and folding.

[www.leevalley.com]

With this, I will cut a 3" apple tree branch in less than 10 strokes... And the reach is great, I can cut a branch much higher without a ladder.

True, it requires more "arm-oil", but when pruning, there aren't that many 3" limbs you will cut in a day...

[Jolicoeur Orchard](#)

Zone 4 in Quebec

Author, [The New Cider Maker's Handbook](#)

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Brittany Kordick](#)


[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 05, 2022 03:21AM

Registered: 4 years ago
Posts: 209

Damn. That brings to mind 'Crocodile Dundee.' No, that's not a handsaw -- THAT'S a handsaw. Agreed, I would prefer to cut most anything by hand, and the problem is, I will cut most anything by hand, mostly out of enjoyment of being physically able to do so. It's a problem because, due to years of not getting all our pruning done, we have entirely too many 3" limbs we are still having to cut through. I'm hoping that if I had a mini chainsaw looped to my pants I could slowly be trained not to reach for my handsaw for every single large limb and maybe get a few more trees pruned at the

end of every day. But it is really nice to know about this saw in case I up the hand saw ante anyway!

I'm not surprised to see my trusty Silky Pocketboy Japanese style saw listed as a related product below this link. Incidentally, I highly recommend the Silky for general pruning cuts . . . as well as plenty of 3" plus big boy cuts 

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/05/2022 03:25AM by Brittany Kordick.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[James Smith](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 05, 2022 04:10AM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 57

How about a link to that 'arm-oil'? I could use some!

I'm afraid my manual days are in the rear-view mirror. Arthritis in the hands and tendonitis in the elbows force me to look for more mechanical help these days. I used to love splitting firewood with a maul, now it's a slow, loud, and petrol hungry power splitter.

Also, I have more than a few 3" limbs to cut in a day these days. I am removing several hundred trees. Anything smaller than 3" goes into the chipper, anything larger is used for heating and cooking.

That Lee Valley saw is a dandy. I used to use smaller versions when I was a landscaper years ago. One should be behind the seat of every pickup truck (at least the ones that are used as pickup trucks) for emergencies.

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[Claude Jolicoeur](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 05, 2022 04:25AM

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 226

James Smith Wrote:

> Also, I have more than a few 3" limbs to cut in a
> day these days. I am removing several hundred
> trees. Anything smaller than 3" goes into the
> chipper, anything larger is used for heating and
> cooking.

Well, that is another story - you are not talking "pruning" anymore!

When we talk cutting a number of large trees and making lengths for burning, I don't think the battery-electric chainsaw can handle the job. Back to the good old standard, petrol powered...

As of the "arm-oil", I don't know if this is an expression known in English. In French we often talk about "huile de bras"... I just did a simple translation.

[Jolicoeur Orchard](#)

Zone 4 in Quebec

Author, [The New Cider Maker's Handbook](#)

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 08, 2022 11:22PM

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 209

Well, I picked up a Milwaukee Hatchet yesterday, and fresh off a trial run, I enthusiastically recommend this pruning saw (it actually is marketed as such, which is why it wasn't initially on my radar as I searched for mini chainsaws). It is so small and light, and thus, easy for toting around either by hand or looped to your pants. It looks, feels, and even revs almost like a toy chainsaw, and I did have my doubts before putting the blade to wood, but once it bites into something, you've got a serious chainsaw in your hands and it zips right through large diameter limbs or small diameter logs.

After reading James' comments about the safety button, which are echoed in many otherwise stellar reviews online, and trying to wrap my relatively small hands around the throttle and safety toggle before I even put the battery in, I had concluded that I would probably be by-passing yet another well-intended safety stupidism with some tape, as well. However, now having used the saw in the field, I found this not to be necessary, and I actually like the toggle. For one thing, you only have to depress it when you fire up the saw. Once you've triggered it, you can let your hand (the side of my palm) off the safety toggle, and the saw will run until you let off the trigger. The size and maneuverability of this thing does render it almost sawzall-like in action, and for me, having the safety toggle there reminds me that I am actually holding a chainsaw and not to be foolish (I was sawing some brush next to a concrete wall, and if I were using a sawzall, I would have no qualms about cutting stupid-close to the concrete). Also, I don't worry about having the saw looped to my pants, against my leg, since there's no chance that the saw will fire up simply because something hit against the trigger.

Maneuverability is awesome. Full disclosure: I did not yet put this saw to the test with a day pruning in the apple orchard yet (and will update this post if I find anything to add once I do), but in making test cuts to some apple and other landscape trees, it was ridiculously easy to perform cuts that I had attempted previously with a larger saw to no end. I have yet to experience any hint of kickback, and felt very comfortable sawing one-handed in situations where I wanted to keep a hand on the limb I was sawing. Likewise, it was very comfortable to saw above my head with one hand pulling a limb down slightly to bring it within reach.

Safety-wise, the short length of the chain and the relative lack of power compared with a bigboy chainsaw make it hard for me to imagine the chain ever flying off this thing were it to get too loose; I think it would just drop to the ground. I ended up just spending a couple hours cutting brush (mostly 1-3 inch pine and mixed hardwood trees and limbs). I had to stop, not to recharge the battery (I just have the one 4.0 amp battery the saw kit

came with, and it was fully recharged within minutes post-hours long use), but because I needed to go back in for more oil (very nice visibility of oil level without having to open the cavity). The oil cavity is tiny, but in direct proportion to the saw's overall size, and I expect to have to add oil at about the same rate I would with our larger chainsaw, but instead of hauling around a gallon of oil, I'll be able to make do with a small bottle that fits in my pocket. If this is a saw you're just carrying with you in case you need to make an occasional large cut, and not planning on using it constantly for a period, you probably wouldn't have to worry about toting oil at all.

Anyway, so far I heartily recommend the Milwaukee Hatchet for pruning, and the added versatility of brush-cutting and small firewood-cutting will probably make this a go-to tool for me:

-- We have been dabbling with selling bundles of average 2 inch diameter applewood logs for smoking, and it is way overkill to use a large chainsaw to do this, but it was the only tool in our arsenal that previously made sense. The Hatchet is very efficient for cutting large limbs into logs.

-- Likewise, we spent last summer cutting a lot of bamboo down locally for tree stakes and chipping up to mulch our apple trees. We expected to use machetes, but quickly graduated to chainsaws, which worked well, but is kind of overkill; this little saw will be perfect for cutting down large quantities of bamboo

-- We chip up all of our prunings, and previously relied on machetes to hack up wide angle limbs for fitting into the chipper, which is exciting and all, but pretty dangerous, particularly as you tire; I'm planning on using this saw extensively post-pruning now to cut up large limbs for the chipper.

In case you can't tell by my run-on review, I'm not the least bit tired from my brush-cutting; so little effort is needed to physically power this saw. I came back in exhilarated rather than exhausted -- it is really nice when you spend money on something and it actually meets your high expectations. Five plus stars. Oh, and Northern Tool has these in stock, so no need to order online and have it shipped unless you wanted to. This Hatchet ended up being \$250 (I had a \$20 off coupon for Northern Tool), so more in line with the DeWalt mini chainsaw I was originally considering, and more than I had really wanted to spend, but the versatility of this saw and my anticipation of regular use make it well, well worth the price.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

Edited 3 time(s). Last edit at 01/09/2022 12:06AM by Brittany Kordick.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Prairie Sundance](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 19, 2022 11:43AM

Battery compatibility doesn't limit your brands alliance as much as it used to. For about \$20 you can buy an after market battery adapter for most major power tool brands that will allow you to use other major brand batteries. This is certainly available for Milwaukee, but a quick search didn't turn one up for Stihl.

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[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 26, 2022 05:20PM

Good to know about this battery adaptor option for the future.

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 47

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 209

Now having used the Milwaukee Hatchet in the orchard daily for a week or so, I am, if possible, even more enthusiastic about its utility. It is small enough to use on one-inch diameter limbs, as well, and while those are certainly no trouble with a handsaw, it is surprising how much time and effort is saved by zipping through them where possible with the mini chainsaw. The other day I was without the Hatchet for the first half of my pruning day, and I couldn't believe how much I missed having it in hand. One unexpected bonus when teetering in the tops of our tallest trees: it's often hard for a short person like myself to get enough purchase for a decent handsawing cut above my head, but gaining an extra foot by length of the chainsaw and ease of cutting often means I am able to make cuts I may have let slide for the time being.

I'm still using the 4.0 amp battery that comes in the kit exclusively, and since I am not cutting constantly (as opposed to a solid hour of straight brush-cutting), I find that a singled charged battery lasts all day for me, even in the cold weather. By 5 pm, I can feel diminished power start to set in, but I have not had to stop using the saw because of it. I have been especially impressed with the battery at times when I go out for a couple hours in the morning, make at least a couple dozen cuts, then have to come back inside for a spell, so put the battery on to charge: most of the time it registers as fully charged when I put it on the charger.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[James Smith](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 31, 2022 04:29AM

Hello Brittany,

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 57

I'm glad you are enjoying your new Hatchett and I appreciate your enthusiastic reviews. I still can't get out in my orchard without sinking up to the top of my boots in snow. We haven't seen the sun in over a week, and the cold just goes right through one. I'm hoping the sunny days forecast this week will at least make it tolerable and I can get out and use mine.

This should do it, eh Michael? :-)

Washington Okanogan Valley
Zone 6b

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[Prairie Sundance](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

April 02, 2022 10:46AM

Registered: 2 years ago

Posts: 47

I have a Makita battery powered chainsaw I use for the timber framing that is right now my day job. I got to use it the other week helping in my neighbor's 5 acre orchard, as well as his Stihl battery saw. The Makita is much heavier than the Stihl, but also much faster, and I noticed that it leaves a much cleaner cut, the Stihl leaving a noticeably raggedy edge. Anyone else concerned about this?

I had a problem with both saws inflicting wounds on the main branches as I finished cuts, something I may get better with, but which rarely happens with my arm-oil saw, (which also leaves nice clean cuts.) I also found it impractical to bring any other tools in the tree with me, so every cut effectively becomes a chainsaw cut, (I would normally carry a loppers and a holstered pruning saw.) Maybe adding a hook on the handle of the chainsaw would let me hang it in the tree so I could use the loppers, but I still can't climb while carrying both...

Two tips:

Keep your batteries warm! They last wayyyyy longer.

Use canola oil for your chain. You can do this for your gas powered saws too, I'm never going to buy petroleum for it again The neighbor showed me this and I looked it up, here's an article [learn.eartheasy.com]

I'll probably continue to use my battery saw at the neighbor's place, as that's the only way I can get myself to take enough wood out of his crowded trees, but I'm glad that I'm a long way off from thinking about using it on our own 4 year old orchard, as I see plenty of drawbacks.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 09, 2023 10:33PM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 133

Brittany, I was intrigued by your review of the Hatchett mini chainsaw. I'm considering something similar. Are you worried about any greater potential kickback, given the snubnose design? My understanding is it's best to avoid using the tip of chainsaws for that reason. With those mini's, it seems like that's all there is.

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

Non-commercial, ~100 fruit trees, dwarf to MM106

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Brittany Kordick](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

January 10, 2023 05:25PM

Registered: 4 years ago

Posts: 209

Kickback has not been an issue for me, but I habitually begin most cuts as far back on the bar as possible (right at the bucking spikes). With a normal, larger saw I'd use the tip of the bar more, as well as make bottom cuts using the top of the bar, but this saw does not seem to lend itself to these sorts of cuts (would not say I experience kickback if I attempt such cuts, just that it's harder to achieve the leverage needed to make good, effective cuts in these positions with this saw). That said, given the small size and maneuverability of the Hatchett, I find that I don't often feel a need to use the tip or top of the bar to make cuts; I can get into all the hard to reach places just fine. A year on, still loving this saw and working it hard, and would be very willing to listen to any endorsement offers that Milwaukee cares to make me! Hope that helps.

[Kordick Family Farm](#)

Westfield, NC

Zone 7a

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/10/2023 05:29PM by Brittany Kordick.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

March 02, 2023 01:08AM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 133

Thanks, Brittany, this was very helpful to read. It turns out we have an old Sawzall in the basement, so new pruning blades for \$20 wins the day for now. But I'll be keeping that Hatchett in mind, too.

Are we cool with quick "Thank you" posts here at HON? I know the intent for the forum is to lean more "informative" and less "chatty," but gosh I hate leaving your post unresponded to for so long. Anyways, thank you!

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

Non-commercial, ~100 fruit trees, dwarf to MM106

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Kyle Barrett](#)

[Re: Miniature Chainsaws](#)

March 12, 2023 07:23PM

Registered: 7 months ago

Posts: 3

I am with Brittany as a champion of the Milwaukee Hatchett. I am able to safely use it on a ladder for big cuts. It's compact design allow for greater control of bigger cuts and I have a hand free to brace branches to prevent any tearing. As for the question around ragged cuts chainsaws can make, I make an initial cut down the branch and make a finishing cuts with a handsaw which is clean and also safe. I find the momentum of the hatchett can

sometimes nick neighboring branches, especially in a narrow crotch.

Kyle Barrett

[Treeline Design](#)

Fairlee, VT Zone 4

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