



Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?

Posted by [Josh Willis](#)

[Forum List](#) [Message List](#) [New Topic](#)

[Josh Willis](#)

[Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 14, 2019 10:53PM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 133

Looking for product recommendations for a trailer sprayer, for community / backyard orchard type settings. We used a backpack for years, but with the 'help' getting older and wiser, I'm looking for something a little easier to manage (esp. for large mature trees).

We'd hoped to attach something to the back frame of our lawn mower (a la Mower Boss style), but it all would seem jury-rigged...which seems a questionable strategy for a \$300-\$500 investment. John Deere actually sells just such an outfit, but I've never heard their name re: sprayers, so that seems a bad idea. As such, it's probably a small trailer type for us.

Presumably we'd look for: decent misting, 25'+ vert spray, ~25 gallon, & electrical hook up.

I see a few out there, but as always, I'm curious about HON's real people experiences.

Thanks, all.

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

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

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

[Kevin Frank](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 14, 2019 11:22PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 24

I bought an electric walk behind cart (Overland Carts/Granite Industries) and it holds a 25 gallon sprayer and a 12 volt battery. No noise, no fumes, nice maneuverability. And it dumps, by hand but you can wash the whole thing out real easy. Not for everyone but it was my new best friend after my elbow said ouch about using a backpack for enough gallons of sauce to put on my 35 very large apple trees. the new carts have a pretty long lasting set of two 24 v batteries. And the cart will transport 750 pounds, albeit slowly uphill with that kind of weight. .

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

[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 01:50AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

I love our Rears 50 gallon sprayer. We tow behind an RTV. It's pretty heavy but does the job well with a very long hose for the wand. Maybe more than you need though, not sure how many trees you are spraying.

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

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

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 04:33AM

Registered: 6 years ago

Posts: 133

The Rears does look pretty nice, I was looking at their 25g Nifty Sprayer. (which should be sufficient for our ~80 trees, I think?). Though I didn't see a price online, so I got lazy and perhaps am drifting towards the NorthStar 21g tow behind tree sprayer (price is in the ball-park, and seems well reviewed).

Good to hear your review, though, thank you!

And Kevin - thanks for your thought, I'd never even heard of such a thing! Looking online, though, I think that's a little more expensive than we are looking to pay. Looks like a cool machine, though!

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

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

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

[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 05:33AM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

The Rears is by far the best of the 3 listed. The Northstar is well reviewed but is in fact not worth it in any way. You just can't get enough pressure to spray trees adequately unless you get right up next to the tree. You might want to check out BDI - they have some nice smaller sprayers including Cima which is used extensively for grapes. There is also a MistBlower that I've heard good things about, but don't have any direct experience.

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

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

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 07:08AM

That's interesting to hear, Mike. Did you use this particular NorthStar model? [www.northerntool.com] They describe a 30' vert spray distance. But I'm curious 'bout your actual experience.

Registered: 6 years ago
Posts: 133

I'll also look into the BDI and MistBlower.

Thanks!

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

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

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 01/18/2019 07:23PM by Josh Willis.

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

[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 08:36AM

We also have a Northstar, I think 25 gallon on wheels but it took a long time to get coverage on each tree. We don't use it anymore, the Rears is so much better, so well made.

Registered: 9 years ago
Posts: 103

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

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

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 07:25PM

Well, your good reviews of the Rears made me call them up to inquire. Sounds like the Nifty series runs about \$3800! Probably well worth it for commercial, but very out of our range for backyard / community applications, unfortunately.

Registered: 6 years ago
Posts: 133

If I understand the difference correctly, the 5hp engine on the Rears gives a high gpm rate + higher PSI...which sounds like it's more important for coverage than for spray distance. If that's right? Sounds like the 12v engine models perhaps can't keep up as much in this regard.

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

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

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

[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 18, 2019 08:18PM

That is the problem with sprayers is that they can get pricey. But also wasting money on a sprayer that can't do the job is also a loss. \$3800 for a good sprayer is actually pretty cheap, if not in line with a backyard operation. The other option that I encourage growers to look at is some of the motor powered [backpack sprayers](#). I've also built sprayers for growers that are powerful than your average backpack sprayer, but still don't match up or give the coverage. The Nifty sprayers are nice, but they still do not have a fan and that is where you get the bang for your buck. Better coverage, distance, etc. The [Pak Blast](#) is about the lowest entry orchard sprayer you can get into (with a fan) without spending the big bucks. Anyway, I have had this conversation so many times with people and tried to match up a lower grade sprayer to their needs and budget, but it never works out. It always ends up that they spend the money for a small airblast sprayer (if they have the trees to justify it) or they end up hand spraying.

Registered: 10 years ago
Posts: 298

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

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

[Peter Fisher](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 19, 2019 06:51PM

Josh:

Registered: 10 years ago
Posts: 82

We have a small orchard like yours (about 140 trees) so I understand the problem: some equipment just doesn't scale down to that size orchard, in a way that makes economic sense. I can't justify the expense of even the smallest air blast sprayer for our orchard, and the backpack sprayer just needs to be filled too often, doesn't get the volume and distance you need, and is a pain lugging up and down our hills.

So I have a Northern Tool 35 gallon sprayer that I pull around in a re-purposed garden tractor cart, with a 12 volt marine battery sitting next to it.

When I had it running off the battery in our Carryall (which is basically a golf cart with a box) it would drain the battery, so it needs its own deep cycle battery, which will last several hours on a charge. I now can spray the whole orchard with two tanks full. I can park it in the aisle and spray about six trees before I have to move on.

I would go with a heavier duty pump than the ones you often find on these small sprayers. I replaced mine with one that will put out much more in gallons per minute.

Agitation is another issue, especially with things like Surround. I rigged up a spray agitator, modifying a cheap agitation kit by adding a nozzle aimed horizontally just above the bottom of the tank. And that's another reason for a heavier duty pump so it can handle the agitation and spraying at the same time.

Is your orchard on a hill like ours? If so, that raises another issue -- getting all the spray out of the tank when its all sloshed to the back or front.

Turkey Creek Orchard
Solon, Iowa (zone 5A)

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

[David Maxwell](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 19, 2019 09:17PM

Registered: 11 years ago
Posts: 197

I am not sure my own experience is germane. I have ~180 trees, on sloping land. I purchased from a neighbour a vintage sprayer made by Hudson, I think in the 1950's, designed for the rural elite, called the "Suburban Power Sprayer". (Cost me "the largest bottle of rum you can find". He, in turn, had won it in a game of poker.) This is a reciprocating pump, with agitator, and 10 Gal tank. (Yes, this is a pest because I have to refill it in mid-stream), driven by a small gas engine. I have had to rebuild parts of it because it is no longer made and parts are no longer available, (and there is no replacement model.) But it has more than enough power to deliver any spray at appropriate coverage rate, up to about 20 ft. high, (which works for me.) It has its own wheels, and I generally drag it around by hand, spraying half-a-dozen trees at a time before having to move. (Could get around this by putting on a longer hose.) But 10 Gal is probably the limit in terms of the weight of manual dragging over uneven ground. I think anything bigger probably needs a trailer and something to tow it.

[Broomholm Orchard](#)

Zone 5b in Nova Scotia

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

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

January 21, 2019 09:03PM

Registered: 6 years ago
Posts: 133

Thank you all for chiming in!

Mike, I definitely agree with spending money wisely on a good investment - that gets to why I love to ask these questions on HON. But as Peter mentions, it's just too hard to justify +\$3000 more if there's no commercial return. That backpack sprayer is actually more or less the latest device we've used.

Peter, it's good to hear your own experience. The NorthStar I'm looking at apparently comes with some agitation (we'll see how effective it is). We are flat-ish, more or less, but that's a real good point to look at.

David - that sprayer sounds awesome, most especially given its history. Hope you keep care of it!

Earthworks

Zone 7a in West-Central MD

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

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

[Elliot Dembner](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

February 04, 2019 01:25AM

Registered: 9 years ago
Posts: 11

I use a 16 gal NORTHSTAR Sprayer powered by a 12 battery on a cart which i pull around. I have the common problem of the Neem coagulating on top of the liquid using Michael's holistic spray recipes. So when done spraying, even tho i initially mix the neem with 7th generation soap of about 2 tablespoons prior to adding to the tank, the "fat" lines the bottom of the tank which i then have to wash out and lose any beneficial value the neem contents will have provided.

Has anyone had experience using the \$30 agitator kit add on from NORTHSTAR? Does this agitator work? Are further modifications required?

Your comments will be greatly appreciated. Thanks

scotts valley, ca

zone 9b

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

[Peter Fisher](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

February 04, 2019 04:01PM

Registered: 10 years ago
Posts: 82

Yes. I have a Northstar sprayer as well and purchased that agitator kit. It was pretty easy to install by drilling a hole in the top of the tank and then connecting hoses

I was disappointed with the design however in that it was simply another vertical bypass tube, with the spray not coming out with sufficient pressure to do much. So I bought some off the shelf fittings, basically an elbow and a nozzle, and fitted them on the end of the tube so it would actually direct a strong spray horizontally along the bottom of the tank. It works pretty well. So you can turn the bypass valve pretty much off and use the agitator as the bypass.

Turkey Creek Orchard
Solon, Iowa (zone 5A)

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

[Peter Fisher](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

February 04, 2019 07:40PM

Here's a picture of the agitator modification, using compression fittings:

[agitator](#)

Registered: 10 years ago
Posts: 82

Turkey Creek Orchard
Solon, Iowa (zone 5A)

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

[Elliot Dembner](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

February 04, 2019 10:19PM

Many thanks Peter. Explains a lot. Got me thinking. Is the diameter of the nozzle tip smaller than the descending tube?

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

[Peter Fisher](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

February 04, 2019 11:15PM

Yes. It is just a plastic replacement sprayer nozzle from the hardware store, which has the usual pin sized hole instead of the giant 3/8" or whatever tube, which is all you get with the kit.

Registered: 9 years ago
Posts: 11

Registered: 10 years ago
Posts: 82

Turkey Creek Orchard
Solon, Iowa (zone 5A)

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

[Josh Willis](#)

[Re: Trailer Sprayer rec. for community / backyard orchards?](#)

May 10, 2019 08:32PM

A follow up post for posterity. We ended up ordering the Northstar. 3 times it failed to hold pressure, and 3 times we received replacement parts to fix. No dice. Off it goes for return. May be a lemon, but we won't be trying them again.

Registered: 6 years ago
Posts: 133

Earthworks
Zone 7a in West-Central MD
Non-commercial, ~100 fruit trees, dwarf to MM106

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

[Newer Topic](#) [Older Topic](#)

[Print View](#) [RSS](#)

Sorry, only registered users may post in this forum.

[Click here to login](#)

This [forum](#) is powered by [Phorum](#).