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small limbs. I used one to take down a small evergreen for a friend, and it quit completely before I got it all de-limbed. I had to get the other saw to finish. Neither has been used again. My 10-in. electric Bauer could've done it all on one charge."

**Jason Pichotta, Crittenden, Ky.:** "I bought a Coleman BT200X minibike from Tractor Supply for cheap transportation. TS matched an online price. I'm 46 years old, and I bought it to make quick trips out to the barn or get the mail in a flash. I can be out to the barn in 10 seconds to check on the animals, stop by and get the mail, and be back in a minute. I should've bought one years ago."

"My Camco RV water hose didn't last and had a bad warranty. Even though it was UV protected, it faded, stained, and split."



**Steve Gorsline, Colony, Kan.:** "My Premier 1 Supplies poultry nesting boxes are made of heavy-duty plastic and are easy to clean."

**Bill Pults, Colorado Springs, Colo.:** Bill nominates his EGO Power 615 cfm cordless blower as a best buy. "I bought this blower to blow snow when we get 2 or 3 in. or less as I don't like shoveling snow anymore. This blower works great on the snow. I can blow the driveway, vehicles, and sidewalk on one charge. It's handy for blowing dirt out of the garage. I've also used it to blow leaves and tumbleweeds and to dry the car after washing. I'm always looking for new ways to use it."

**Bernie Whisler, Allegan, Mich.:** "I bought my Kubota L4300 DT new in 2002, and the only thing I've had to replace so far is a battery in 2022 and a hydraulic hose in 2023. It runs great."

**Bruce Porkka, Atlantic Mine, Mich.:** Bruce is the satisfied owner of a 2021 Brother laser printer (MFC-L2690DW). "The toner cartridge lasts a long time for the unpredictable and infrequent printing demands of a small business. There's no need to do a print head cleaning or maintenance, and the ink won't dry out like an inkjet printer."

**Howard Stemen, Dickey, N.D.:** "In May 2023, I bought a low-mileage 2021 Ford Bronco Sport Big Bend. It drives nicely. It's very snappy for only a 1.5-liter turbo and has made over 33 mpg. I'm very happy with it."

**David Pfizenmaier, Clay Center, Kan.:** "My DeWalt 20-volt 1/2-in. drive impact has plenty of torque, and I can take it anywhere. The lithium-ion batteries are long-lasting. We use it for just about everything. It handles the axle mount tractor dual bolts very well."

"I bought a Wilde Tool punch set in 2021. They don't seem durable enough. They're bending and breaking earlier than they should."

**Jack Essary, Taneyville, Mo.:** "I purchased a new Honda 420 4-WD ATV in 2014. It has 24,000 miles on it now and runs just as well today as it did new. I put a new battery in it after 6 years. It works hard on the farm every day and probably has another 24,000 miles in her. Great machine."

Jack isn't as pleased with his Husqvarna 575 chainsaw. "It broke in half on the first stick of 4-in. wood. The dealer wanted to know what I did to it. It didn't run long enough to get dirty. He fixed it, but it never ran long enough to cut a load of logs. I should've bought an axe."

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**Clark Ogden, Roach, Mo.:** "I've used Milwaukee tools for years. They're well-built and last a long time. I'm still using a 3/8 drill I bought in the early 60's. My 2023 18-volt Hackzall has plenty of power and is very handy. I cut 2 by 4s, 6s and 8s with no problem. The battery lasts quite well. It was pricey but worth it."

**Gary L. Ahlbrecht, Brownton, Minn.:** "My 2021 Toro zero-turn 54-in. lawn mower with 26-hp. Kohler engine took a little getting used to. If you turn quickly, you might leave divots in the grass. I quickly learned to move the steering levers slow and easy. It's so much more maneuverable than lawn tractors and other front-mounted mowers. I had a Toro Proline before this that I really liked, but this works much better and faster."

"I haven't had any bad purchases lately, but I've developed a real hatred for some of the electronic controls on some equipment. It seems like where they used to have a simple on-off type switch, you now have a complicated digital product. Our older camper had a heater-A/C switch lever you moved right or left to turn on the heat and high or low. If you wanted the A/C, you moved it the other way for on and high or low. The newer camper has five buttons to push on until you find the right one."

"The same is true with the leveling-unhooking jacks. The leveling jack's control box is mounted inside a side door you have to bend over and stick your head into. It's very uncomfortable. Also, the procedure for using them is confusing. If you used them every day, a person might understand the system better. But if it's only a few times a year, for an old guy like me, who hates electronics anyway, it could be better. I wonder if the designers ever tried using some of their creations before they put them up for sale."

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**Nick O'Reilly, Millville, Minn.:** "In 2021, I bought a small NorthStar NSQ Series (2272Q) 12-volt sprayer for my deer food plot to spray soybeans and around fence lines. I made a mount on my old Allis-Chalmers C. The sprayer has a wand I can use around the fence lines or a valve to spread a 12-ft. path on the food plot. I keep the metal screen clean and have had no issues."

**John G. Ruff, Logan, Kan.:** "I'm well pleased with my 2022 Snapper XD 82V cordless electric lawn mower. I haven't had any problems. It can do jobs faster, easier, and safer than my previous gas engine mower."



Deck turned up 90 degrees and seat tipped up for easy access.

## Zero-Turn Best Buy

**Dale McLaen, Rutland, N.D.:** My Deines Magnum 20 zero-turn mower (www.marty-j.com) is my best buy. Built in Kansas, it has 20 hp. and a heavy-duty, 60-in. front-mounted deck.

"The big deck can poke in under overhanging branches of trees and shrubs or under machinery to cut stray weeds."

"Best of all, by unhooking two clips, I can stand the deck up at a full 90 degrees for easy access. I can clear off crud or sharpen blades without having to rig up a way to lift

the machine for simple deck maintenance."

"The seat platform tips up for full access to the engine and drives, not that I've needed to do major repairs. I have 1,600 hrs. on it, and all I've done is routine maintenance."

"My Deines is nothing fancy. It doesn't have cup holders, USB ports, or other bells and whistles. It just excels at being a good dependable mower that's very easy to service."

## Seed Plate Best Buy

**Marty Whitney, Wellington, Ohio.:** "I use seed plates from Larry Hak to plant wheat with my Kinze corn planter (www.sproutingourimportantlegacy.com; (ph 419-605-1747). I get wheat stands that are as good as what I get with a drill."

"I started using Larry's seed plates about 15 years ago after hearing about people using their planter to plant wheat. When I called Kinze, they recommended Larry's plates. They said they didn't have anything that could compete with his for planting wheat."

"I like using a corn planter for wheat. It maintains a perfect depth and nice singulation at the population I want. I plant a heavy population, around 2 million seeds per acre with my Kinze 3600. It's a 12-row, 30-in. row planter with a splitter, so it plants 23 rows of 15-in. wheat."

"I'm now on my second generation of Larry's Vartillon planter plates. I've had them for two seasons, and they're even better than his first plates. I no longer have to disassemble the planter units to switch from wheat to soybeans. His new plates plant both wheat and soybeans, as well as other crops



Vartillon planter plate.

such as oats and cover crop seed mixes. Simply vary the ground speed and gear ratio to match the crop."

"This year, we averaged 80 bushels of wheat, and even though we were really dry this summer, we pulled around 63 to 64 bushels of soybeans per acre."

"Larry sells his seed plates directly online. He has four versions, all priced at \$39.95 per row."

I love the convenience – just put in a fresh battery and go. It's wonderful for doing little jobs that I wouldn't have done before, and there's no servicing required."

"The only downside is it takes strong hands and some force to install or remove the battery from the mower and charger, which could cause problems for some people."

**Richard T. Luebke, Ladysmith, Wis.:** "My LS MT357 tractor with cab and loader starts great in cold weather and is very maneuverable. The hydrostatic is great for moving snow and round hay bales."

**Mike Schulz, Kewaskum, Wis.:** "I use my 2022 Case IH 40C tractor to clear snow, cut trails, and prepare food plots. It handles all these tasks very well. The dealership has also been great to work with from the beginning."

**Don Santee, Menomonie, Wis.:** "My best buy is a 1998 Grasshopper 728D. I've mowed my 3-acre lawn for 25 years and I'm not even thinking about replacing it."

**Joas Bontrager, La Farge, Wis.:** Joas is pleased with his Stihl chainsaws. He bought a 462 in 2019 and a 661 in 2020. "I'm a logger by trade, and these chainsaws are absolute workhorses. They get run hard and come back looking for more. I've changed a few bearings in the motors over the years, plus regular maintenance such as filters and spark plugs. They start regardless of how hot or cold it is (even down to -15 F)."

"My worst buy was my last pair of Carolina work boots. The soles were shot after 9 mo. of use. The laces weren't much good either."