



Picking Out A Chainsaw

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If you don't have a chainsaw, you may be thinking of getting one to clean up winter storm damage. Like most tools, there isn't any one size that is best for all situations. Before buying a chainsaw, it's a good idea to first think about where and how you will likely use it.

I have had several chainsaws, large and small, over the years. Currently I have a Stihl 029 with an 18-inch bar. It would be considered a mid-weight saw for cutting trees up to 18 inches in diameter, although I certainly have cut larger trees on occasion. It is more than capable of handling most chainsaw work I encounter. Heavyweight chainsaws with bars of 20 inches and up are generally considered professional grade.

For my money, chainsaws are one place where bigger is not always better. While I have been happy with my 029, at more than 14 pounds, it is really too big for many common jobs around the farmstead. It is ungainly when working with smaller trees and brush and very limited for trimming branches. It is in these situations that a smaller unit with an 8 to 10-inch bar is handier and safer to use.

This isn't to say a chainsaw of any size is safe. By its very nature, it is one of the most dangerous tools most of us will ever use. So pick your chainsaw carefully, use it with caution, and it will serve you well for many years.

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