

It's a snip

Assessment: Julie Hollobone, Judith Blacklock and students **Photos:** Mark Winwood, Greg Scott **Product Research:** Tony Norgrove

One of the many returns of growing flowers in the garden is that you can cut and bring a selection of stems into the house as a simple posy or as part of an arrangement. Many gardeners might reach for the secateurs or kitchen scissors for this task, but if you are regularly cutting flowers for the house, there are tools on the market more specifically designed to cut cleanly through these finer stems. These are more lightweight than secateurs, and smaller so that they sit easily in the palm of the hand. They also have by-pass blades (that pass over each other as they cut), making it easier to both cut the stems from the plant and trim them quickly and easily before adding to a vase or arrangement.

We chose a selection of flower cutters to test that fall into two groups; those with scissor handles and those following a secateur-type design. The cutters were principally tested on a range of flower stems varying in woodiness from soft flower or leaf stems to tougher rose and shrub stems. Students and staff at Judith Blacklock's Flower school helped with the testing. Due to their lightweight design, the tools were also assessed for deadheading flowers in the border, where the stems are often thin and numerous so a quick cutting action is useful.

In general, the secateur types with a spring between the handles were popular and suit a repetitive style of cutting. The scissor types received less votes, but they suited those with small hands and were useful for cutting just a few stems.

Key to scoring

- A great buy, full marks
- Strong all-rounder
- Performs as expected
- Does the job – just!
- Not recommended



BEST BUY

Darlac Compact Snips DP42

These were a popular choice for many testers as they found the sharp blades gave a definite cut. The handles are slightly moulded and comfortable in the hand and the spring opens the blades between cuts but is not too firm. The lever safety catch on the handles is easy to use

Price: £10.75 **Verdict:** ●●●●●