

Factsheet on Secateurs

As a young horticulturalist starting out, I clearly remember saving my retail nursery pay for weeks and weeks to buy a pair of felco secateurs.

With a pair of felcos in a pouch on your side you had truly arrived in the 'Nursery Industry' and people took you seriously.

Fast forward 40 plus years and I still have that original pair of felcos, (felco 9's for purists), however day to day working with indoor plants I have found that I don't need the cutting power of traditional secateurs and have almost exclusively moved to snips or florist shears or fruit snips.



Trusted Felcos

Basically a straighter edged pruning tool, great for soft, delicate work such as trimming and shaping indoor plant leaves. Although I still carry a pair of traditional secateurs, I find that 9 out of 10 times I reach for snips.

So here is what I have found out about snips over the last 40 years.

For interior plantscaping I try to select a stainless steel, chrome or nickel finish so my snips don't rust and easily wipe clean and disinfect.

I prefer the locking mechanism to be a button type so I can lock the blades shut with one hand. I always carry snips on a pouch, preferring the conical type as the pointed ends of snips make quick work of nylon or cordura pouches.

The cheaper the snip the harder it is to keep sharp!

I like the larger size snips as I find the fruit snip types little small, although they are certainly economical.

So what snips do I use or recommend:

1. My favorite is the Kamaki Home Garden Secateur. I have used these for 2 decades. But recently the Japanese company that makes them stopped production and I am reliably informed that there are no more in Australia, although other countries may still have some stock.

Not much of a recommendation if you can't get them but the blades are chrome plated, hold a beautiful edge, the secateurs feel good in the hand and the safety lock is easily operated whilst in the hand.

A very similar design is Burgon & Ball Florist shear, endorsed by the Royal Horticultural Society, however the blades are carbon steel and do rust if not properly maintained.



Favorite Kamaki, (collector's item)

2. The second group include Cutabove Tools, pruning Secateurs. They feature long pointed blades, high carbon SK5 steel. Again nice in the hand but the locking mechanism clips the handles at the bottom and is harder to do one handed.

Cyclone Floral Snips with titanium coated SK5 steel and a good one handed quick release lock.

Chikamasa TS 66 secateurs, another Japanese made secateurs with coated blades, a lower blade with serrations, helping them to stay sharp and a thumb lock easily to use with one hand.



Left to Right Kamaki, Cutabove Tools, Cyclone, Chikamasa, Burgon & Ball, Fiskars

3. The third group are economical which is important when pairs often go missing from 'Plant Technician' kits either forgotten at the job or even picked up by civilians when used and put down in public places.

These include Fiskars SP45, a scissor shaped tool but with springs and a form fitting handle.

Barnel Professional series fruit-floral secateurs with stainless steel blades. Ryset Australia Fruit picking shears. Big Horn fruit snip long blasé ARS fruits pruner 300L and special mention to ARS SE-45 a fruit snip but with replaceable stainless steel blades.



Fruit pickers

As to my EDC (Every Day Carry) I have a selection in my 'Plant Technician' kit, including Felco 160 for those larger stems, Cut Above Tools Pruning Secateurs, ARS SE-45, my trusted Kamaki's and a pair of Burgon & Ball Sophie Conran precision secateurs.



Every Day Carry

For special occasions I use my hand crafted Japanese Tobisho clippers, a family gift for someone seemingly obsessed with secateurs and snips of all types.



Special occasions

Obviously we will all have our own criteria for a good pair of snips and I know some Plantscapers who still swear by their traditional secateurs and wonder what all this snip rubbish is!

Disclaimer - I did not have to go out and buy any snips for this article, all came from our business supplies and used by our fantastic 'Plant Technicians', who all have their own favorites – hence the collection.

Enjoy pruning!

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