

Choosing a Rotary Cutter, like a Bushhog - QUWF 25-02

Probably the first attachment most will acquire after purchasing a tractor is a rotary cutter, commonly referred to as a “Bush Hog” the leading brand in this category but versions are made by several other companies. The rules for choosing one for your tractor are pretty much the same.



Here is what you must know to purchase the right model for your tractor and use.

1. Rotary Cutter models and brands like a Bush Hog, are sized for the cutting capacity of the cutter and blades, stated as the diameter of the brush it can cut, in the manual. The first size is normally up to 1-inch diameter, requires less Power Take Off horsepower and is 5 foot wide for smaller tractors. The second size is for 2-inch diameter brush, takes more horsepower and is generally about 6.5 feet wide. **This is the most common size in use by small farms and hobby farmers. There are larger units for much more horsepower.**
2. **Ensure you know the Power Take Off (PTO) Horsepower of your tractor to match the cutter you want to buy. The most common 6-foot model takes about 40 horsepower or more to run.**
3. **Make sure your tractor has the lift capacity at the 3 point hitch to lift the cutter. On average the 6 foot cutter comes in over 950 pounds. A 7-foot model can be 1300 pounds.**
4. Third, make sure the width of the rotary cutter is the same or slightly larger than the rear tire width of your tractor. Otherwise, you will be flattening grass and brush making it harder for the cutter to mow. This may require another pass to clean up.

5. **We highly suggest and recommend you purchase the front and rear guards for the cutter.** They help prevent chips and rocks or other debris from flying out from under the cutter while in operation, they can be very dangerous if you are hit.
6. **Finally, READ THE MANUAL before the first use, and reread it before each season. Know how to set the height above ground at the front and rear. Know how to increase it if you have rocky pastures like we do. Keep good records of what you did and when. January and February are good months to hit your library of manuals. When was the last time you read the tractor manual for example?**

General Notes on the Cutter:

7. **The cutter requires regular maintenance and service!** Grease the fittings about every 8 hours of use and check the gear box gear oil each season, change it if it appears a milky color. To change the gearbox oil, most require a suction pump to draw the oil out through the filler cap, they are not expensive, so have one at the ready before you need it. There is no bottom drain due to the stump jumper blade assembly.
8. Know whether you have a slip clutch PTO shaft or a shear pin shaft and how to **regularly** service and check each.
9. **SAFETY ALWAYS** - When operating the rotary cutter, stay alert at all times. Never turn on the cutter with other people standing around. Look for any object in front of you that could damage the cutter like metal pieces in the field, large stumps or other objects. Be ready to lift the cutter or shut the cutter off quickly if need be. Wear hearing protection and eye protection. Pay attention to what things sound like and listen for anything out of the ordinary.
10. **Always start the cutter at low RPMs then throttling up to the PTO 540 setting.**

Check out QUWF 25-03 Info Sheet for “Setting the Rotary Cutting Height” instructions. It is a PDF so you can download.