

What?

- The lopper is a large tool used for cutting off or pruning twigs and branches of trees and large shrubs up to 1 inch in diameter. The most commonly used consist of two blades that slide past each other like scissors (known as ‘bypass loppers’). One blade is concave, which helps to keep the branch that is being cut from slipping out of the cutting surface.
- Pruning shears look like straight-bladed scissors with a spring between the blades. They are typically used for more delicate pruning requiring limited leverage, such as shaping large areas of small growth, or hedge cutting.

Why?

- Loppers and shears are particularly useful for cutting back vegetation and hedges at the side of footpaths, as well as for scrub clearance on nature reserves.
- They are relatively safe tools to use compared with billhooks and axes for example. However, as with all tools, it is important to use them correctly and for the appropriate task.
- When pruning, cut back to the ‘branch collar’ at the base of the branch – it looks neater and stops decay from setting in.



Do ✓

- ✓ Check the site for dangers/nesting birds
- ✓ Check the nuts and bolts have not worked loose
- ✓ Wear a hard hat if you are cutting anything above head height
- ✓ Make sure you have a good footing
- ✓ When using the extendable shears, ensure they are locked in position before you start to use them
- ✓ Keep your work area tidy and clear up any branches/cuttings as you go
- ✓ Carry loppers and shears safely with the blade pointing downwards

Don't ✗

- ✗ Don't use tools if the two shafts are bent and coming together, you could trap your fingers
- ✗ Don't use shears for woody vegetation; use loppers instead
- ✗ Don't use loppers to cut wood that is more than 1" thick; the normal rule is nothing bigger than your thumb; use a bow saw for anything bigger
- ✗ Don't leave loppers or shears unattended and be aware of individuals using them
- ✗ Don't leave sharp edges of vegetation sticking out
- ✗ Don't let bypass loppers twist as you cut; keep a firm grip on the handles as you cut and don't let the tool rotate

Document Name	<i>TBT Loppers & Shears</i>	Document No.	<i>OC/HS/TBT 25</i>
Document Owner	<i>David Shaftoe</i>	Date of Issue	<i>07.06.20</i>
Related TBTs	<i>Coppicing & Tree Felling; Manual Handling; Scrub Clearing & Tree Popping; Working Around Trees & Hedgerows</i>	Version No.	<i>1</i>