

Frequently Asked Questions: Root Slayer

What is the Root Slayer designed for?

Roots always seem to get in the way of digging, whether you expect them or not. Once you switch to the Root Slayer you might not even notice them most of the time. The Root Slayer is really a multi-purpose shovel that can eliminate the need for other tools, such as hatchets, pry-bars, and saws, when simply digging around the home. If you've ever hit roots while trying to plant a perennial, or been stymied by roots when trying to dig up a shrub, or tried to divide hostas with a spade only to have them slide away from your shovel, you'll know what we're talking about. You can use the Root Slayer as your go-to shovel. You can also use it to replace your nursery spade. Think of it as a shovel, root hatchet, and root saw all in one tool.

What's with the inverted V cut into the end of the blade? I've never seen that before.

*The patent pending Root Slayer blade is unique. All other shovels we've ever seen either come to a point, are rounded, or are almost flat at the end. These shapes are all fine digging in soil without roots. But, **when a traditional shovel hits a root it usually bounces off to one side or the other.** Not only is this an ineffective way to dig; it's also dangerous because you can suddenly lose your footing and fall.*

How is it digging with that unusual shape at the end of the blade? Won't the tips bend?

First of all, the tips won't bend; they're made of industrial strength carbon steel. Secondly, it digs like a dream. The pair of pointed tips makes it much easier to penetrate thick, weedy, rooty soil. If you don't think about the way it looks, the Root Slayer will just feel like the best shovel you've ever used.

Is it sharp?

It's sharp enough to cut through roots up to, and sometimes greater than, 1.25" in diameter in a single stroke. You can saw through much larger roots using the specially designed, sharpened teeth on the sides of the blade. The extra-wide steps give you lots of stability when kicking through roots.

Can I saw branches with it?

It's a shovel. It's not a saw. While you can saw through branches, the Root Slayer is designed to cut only on the kick stroke. Its extra-large, front-facing teeth are shaped and sharpened specially for that purpose. We recommend that if you need to cut branches you use a pruning saw.

Why is the handle round at the end instead of shaped like a "D"?

The patented "Natural Radius Grip" O-handle is designed to reduce hand, wrist, arm and shoulder stress. It has four times the gripping surface of a "D" handle shovel, allowing you to use both hands comfortably at the same time. You'll find that you naturally grip the handle in a wrist-neutral position, which maximizes your power while minimizing stress.

Won't it break if I try to cut through serious roots?

It is tested to more than 150% of the British standard for shovel strength. The blade is made of super strong carbon steel. The shaft is made of resin encased, carbon steel. We're so sure it won't break that we give it a lifetime warranty!

What are its physical dimensions?

It is 44.5 inches from the tip of the blade to the top of the grip. The blade is 2.5mm thick (just thicker than 13 gauge) and just under 13 inches long, with 3.5 inch steps. It weighs 5.4 pounds.

I think I just need a good transplanting shovel. Isn't the Root Slayer a bit of overkill?

The Root Slayer is the best transplanting shovel you will ever use. It cuts through all kinds of roots, but otherwise acts just like a normal transplanting shovel or nursery spade. It is just awesome for transplanting perennials and shrubs, making the job faster and a lot easier. It's perfect for dividing perennials because the plant won't slip away as you try to split it.

Will it rust?

It will never rust if you treat it well. Like all carbon steel shovels, the blade should be cleaned and lightly oiled after each use. It only takes a minute to do this, but it really keeps the blade in tip-top condition. If it does ever rust, you can use coarse steel wool to take off the rust. Another trick is simply to dig with it for a while in slightly sandy soil. This acts like sandpaper and will make it look like new.

I tried to return another shovel that broke after I sharpened the blade. They said it voided the warranty. Can I sharpen the Root Slayer?

Feel free to sharpen it if you prefer a sharper edge than the factory edge. We deliver it sharp enough to do the job, but we stop for safety reasons before it's razor sharp. It's very easy to sharpen with a metal file or a rotary sharpening tool. We aren't looking for any excuses to void the warranty. It's meant to be used for a lifetime and that's our warranty.

What gives the blade its gunmetal appearance?

We powder coat the blades to provide additional protection. The powder coating process basically bakes on a protective enamel. It's normal for it to wear away in some places after heavy and prolonged use. Don't worry about it if this happens to your Root Slayer; just clean and oil it after each use and it will last for a lifetime.

I'm allergic to rubber? Is there any rubber used in this product?

The shaft is coated with polypropylene. The grip is made of a PP-based thermoplastic elastomer. There is not any rubber or latex used in the product.

I saw another product with a similar sounding name that also had teeth along the sides. Also, there are other shovels that claim to cut through roots. What makes the Root Slayer better?

The most important things to look for in a tool are strength, fitness for a particular purpose, and ergonomics. We strength tested the most popular similar products on the market to Root Slayer standards. They broke immediately, with one failing below the British standard. We also performance tested the most popular similar products in dense soil filled with roots. The Root

Slayer was the only one that cut through thick roots in a single stroke. As for the ergonomics, the Root Slayer uses the award-winning, patented, Natural Radius Grip. The Root Slayer is by far the best tool in its category. If you don't agree, we'll happily refund your money.

I wonder if that narrow blade shape will be as effective at digging as a round point shovel.

The Root Slayer is great for any kind of digging, whether there are roots in the soil nor not. The narrow blade end makes it easier to dig, but the length and upper width of the blade actually allow it to hold more soil than most round-point shovels do. Try it in heavy clay and rocky soils!

My favorite hand weeder has a forked tip that looks a lot like the Root Slayer's tip. I wonder if I could use the Root Slayer on big weeds.

We certainly do. The Root Slayer is one of the best tools we know of to remove stubborn weeds with big deep roots like bull thistle and burdock. Plunge the blade into the soil once or twice trying to follow the root to loosen it, then pry it out just like you would a smaller weed with a hand weeder.

I've seen a metal detecting shovel that also had teeth on its blade. Do you recommend this shovel for metal detecting?

We recommend it for landscaping, transplanting, dividing perennials, gardening, metal detecting, bonsai collecting, and just about anything else you can think of.

Where is the Root Slayer made?

It was designed in Ann Arbor, Michigan and is manufactured in China. We closely monitor all aspects of production, including working conditions and human rights. We proudly invite anyone to audit our manufacturing facilities.

That handle looks exactly like the handle on my favorite Radius Garden tool. Did you copy it from them?

The Root Slayer is actually a Radius Garden product using the revolutionary, patented, Natural Radius Grip.