

Hay cutting, raking and baling/collecting in small meadows

A summary of information from Moor Meadows members with some general advice for those land managers with small and/or inaccessible meadows unsuitable for large contractor machinery.

Most responses were from people wanting help in this area so there is a demand for advice, sharing equipment, finding local contractors.

There is a mix of manual/hand tools and machinery. If you want to make hay by hand, there are some useful tips here, including how to make a haystack [Making Hay on the Homestead - YouTube](#)

Cutting

See this useful video for an overview of small meadow cutting options including scything & mowing [Meadow management - community green spaces - YouTube](#)

Scythes

Several members use scythes but some found it had become impractical due to age, fitness etc. especially for larger areas. Good for smaller areas and avoids using fossil fuels and give you a good workout. May be purchased with a range of fittings and sizes from

[Austrian Scythes for sale. \(thescytheshop.co.uk\)](#)

[Scythes | Tools & Equipment | Emorsgate Seeds – \(01553\) 829 028 \(wildseed.co.uk\)](#)

Many find them more convenient and easier than a brushcutter, for cutting bramble, bracken, hogweed etc. with the ditch blade attachment.

Scythe mowers/ power scythes - often a 2 wheeled power unit with attachment

The popular choice. Here we mean something with a reciprocal cutting bar, which cuts in a scissor action (a bit like a hedge cutter) leaving long intact stems. They were referred to by a few names/ makes etc. The power units generally have a variety of available attachments such as rakes etc. See below. BCS is a popular make but other makes are available and can be bought second hand or rented.

This image shows a heavy duty model -the BCS COMMANDER, which is good for sloping ground



Power scythes can be bought or rented:

To buy

- [Power Scyther for Sale - Radmore & Tucker \(radmoreandtucker.co.uk\)](http://radmoreandtucker.co.uk)
- [Power Scythe, Long Grass Cutter, Scythe Mower \(bsgtractorsandmachinery.co.uk\)](http://bsgtractorsandmachinery.co.uk)
- [BCS Crusader Power Scythes – Tracmaster Ltd](#)
- Bertolini scythe mower - Abbey Garden Machinery, Tavistock 01822 614053 or info@abbeygarden.com

To rent, see the Devon section at <https://www.tracmaster.co.uk/pages/where-to-hire-a-bcs-power-scythe>

Prices vary. Around £50 per day, £60 for two days and not too much more for a week (from HS hire Teignmouth)

e.g.

Diamond Tool Hire	Oakfield, Tedburn St Mary	Exeter
Bradfords Building Supplies Ltd	96 Hendford Hill	Yeovil
Kingsbridge Hire	Units 4-7, Torr Trade Park, East Allington	Totnes
HS Hire	Teignmouth Devon TQ14 9AE	Teignmouth

Mowers

A few models used. Removing material after cutting may be difficult unless there is some grass collecting facility. These chop up the grass cuttings so not suitable for making hay.

A recommended make is the Orec Rabbit 4x4 mower [Orec Mowers UK \(crwillcocks.co.uk\)](http://crwillcocks.co.uk) from CR Willcocks in Newton Abbot. It features in the video link under the cutting heading above.

Strimmers

A few models used. Need a powered unit (not corded!) and potentially a brush cutter blade if heavy going. There are battery powered units available now, which make less noise and petrol fumes. Stihl models for commercial use would be recommended. Domestic strimmers aren't powerful enough to complete the job in a reasonable time and finish.

This is generally a faster cutting option than a scythe but clearing up/raking afterwards takes longer and can be harder work due to the grass being chopped into smaller fragments compared to a scythe. It may be an easier option for some people.

Small tractors

Some members have these. There is some scope for sharing locally here. They are widely sold by machinery suppliers.

Raking

Hand raking

A traditional hay rake for raking up long grass into rows [Rakes | Tools & Equipment | Emorsgate Seeds – \(01553\) 829 028 \(wildseed.co.uk\)](#).

Other places may also sell these or you could make your own [Make a Swallowtail Hay Rake - one day green woodworking course \(craftcourses.com\)](#)

Hay rake attachment

For two wheeled tractors or power units (e.g. BCS). The hay rake is a fantastic tool for rowing-up meadow grass and wildflowers, especially after using the scythe and saves huge amounts of time over hand raking.

[BCS Hay Rake \(ukmowersdirect.co.uk\)](#)



Buck rake attachment for BCS power units

A useful way to move grass cuttings and scrub cuttings. It's not best for making rows but great for moving into piles (habitat or compost piles). A different use than the hay rake above.



Baling

Hand baling



There are a number of videos on making and using hand balers. They all operate along the same lines by squeezing hay into a receptacle before binding with baler twine.



[Making hand-made hay bales with a box baler - YouTube](#)

Mini-baler

Again, BCS have an attachment for the pedestrian power unit. There are others for compact tractors.

