

# Husqvarna sets new standard

New-generation 50 cc chainsaws from Husqvarna set a new standard for cutting capacity

In January this year, Husqvarna unveiled the company's next generation of 50 cc chainsaws for professional loggers and arborists, the Husqvarna 550 XP Mark II and the 545 Mark II. Redesigned from scratch, these new saws result in a new level of cutting capacity, manoeuvrability and endurance, making them optimised for harvest forestry and urban forestry applications including felling, limbing, removals or cross-cutting of small and mid-sized trees.

Cutting capacity is the true measure of the performance of the saw. It is the speed at which the entire system of the bar, chain and powerhead works together to cut wood at optimal rpm. Through a series of internal tests, Husqvarna has shown that the 550 XP Mark II provides best-in-class cutting capacity when comparing to the closest competitor in the 50 cc segment. Full details of these tests are available at [www.husqvarna.com/uk/products/chainsaws/newchainsawgeneration](http://www.husqvarna.com/uk/products/chainsaws/newchainsawgeneration).

"It's not just a new chainsaw, it's a new generation of chainsaws in which all vital parts are new. The Husqvarna 550 XP Mark II has superior cutting capacity and has been proven through the most extreme testing to assure it meets expectations of our most demanding forestry and tree-care professionals. We are redefining the 50cc segment by setting a new standard for performance, durability and manoeuvrability," explained Gent Simmons, Director of product management, Forestry.

The cooling capacity of the Husqvarna 550 XP Mark II and Husqvarna 545 Mark II has been improved by 13%, compared to the previous generation of 50 cc chainsaws from Husqvarna. This has been made possible by three key improvements:

- (1) an optimised airflow;
- (2) the addition of more cooling fins in critical areas that contribute to more effective cylinder heat dissipation; and
- (3) an insulating heat shield, specifically developed for the new chainsaws, which provides sealing against the cylinder area and minimises heat leakage. This helps keep the carburettor compartment cool to improve startability in hot conditions. In addition, a completely new muffler keeps temperatures down.

A new air filter design comes from the combination of a redesigned air filter with higher capacity and improved sealing and an upgrade of the Air Injection. This in turn means the saws are equipped with a new optimised version of AutoTune.

With a user-centric design, the well-balanced saw body with low gyroscopic forces provides excellent manoeuvrability and handling, enabling users to work longer without tiring. Ergonomically designed handles



provide a safe, comfortable grip. The Husqvarna 550 XP G Mark II and the Husqvarna 545G Mark II are equipped with heated handles, giving more comfort during cold-weather use.

The new chainsaws have two felling sights; one vertical and one horizontal - both are moulded into the plastic for clear aiming and permanent guidance.

The unveiling of the saws took place at Husqvarna's global press event, held over 17-18 January. John Tunnicliffe attended the event on behalf of Forestry Journal and gives us his impressions of the saws here.

For the second time in under two years Husqvarna chose to do a global launch of their new chainsaws in January this year. This time, rather than a brand-new model, it's an upgrade to existing models. Husqvarna were presenting the 545 and 550 XP Mark II. A brave move in this day in age, some might say. With our endless



Above left: The new saws unveiled.

Above right: The Husqvarna team.

Left: Linn Arvidsson felling with the felling sight.

REDESIGNED FROM SCRATCH, THESE NEW SAWS RESULT IN A NEW LEVEL OF CUTTING CAPACITY, MANOEUVRABILITY AND ENDURANCE

appetite for new toys this may be the reason why they chose to do it on home soil.

An early start was the order of the day as we flew out from Heathrow to Gothenburg then onto Jönköping by taxi - all organised with fantastic efficiency by Husqvarna UK.

That evening we travelled to the Husqvarna museum, birthplace of this proud brand. In the Old Forge, part of the museum, we were treated to the launch of the new saws. This is where we got a look at the 545 and 550 XP Mark II. A host of company executives told us why they had chosen to launch the new saws right now. It is no coincidence that this is the company's 300th anniversary, and 60 years since they produced their first ever chainsaw.

The following day we travelled to Norrahammar for an extended series of live demonstrations. The Husqvarna team were on hand to give presentations of various techniques and scenarios they envisaged the professional user might put the new saws through. There were some impressive displays of the saws' handling and performance; so impressive in fact that we hardly noticed the sub-zero temperatures.



Martin Götz with the 550XP Mark II.

# EQUIPMENT NEWS

One particularly interesting scenario was a flat-out race ripping two identical logs. The new 550 XP Mark II was pitted against the old 550 that it is set to replace, with the new saw turning in a winning time almost two seconds quicker than the old model.

Getting my hands on the saw for the first time, I was pleasantly surprised by how solid it felt. Cross-cutting was smooth, pickup was excellent and power held on right through the cut. The new front handle makes the saw comfortable, predictable and it felt a pleasure to use when doing fast delimiting on the competition poles they had set up for us to use.

The finale to our trip took us to the factory at Huskvarna. No, that isn't a typo - Huskvarna is a small suburb of Jönköping, home to the production line for the Mark II saws, and a host of other products. As you'd expect, this is a modern, hi-tech line that wouldn't be out of place in any car production facility. The latest laser scanners and multi-angle photo scanner booths ensure every one of the 6,500 saws per day that are produced in Jönköping is finished to the exact same standard. All this hi-tech equipment is housed within the original saw factory, right in the heart of town. It was a pleasure to see that Huskvarna still have such pride in their heritage to continue using this building rather than moving out of town to a new or more modern facility.

The last act of our visit was to fell the company Christmas tree that stood in the centre of the factory yard, thus signalling not only the end to the festive merrymaking, but also of our time in Sweden.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

The new 550 Mark II has several detail changes from the previous model. Gone is the decompressor button and it has a redesigned front handle that gives a bit more room between the handle and top cover. This was a criticism of the old 550 which was a tight fit for anyone with big hands. The handle is also moved forward by 10 mm to make it more ergonomic, putting more distance between the front and rear handles and getting rid of the slightly cramped feeling of the older saw. It is also claimed that it makes for a more positive, more rigid grip.

A new cooling system that channels air over the crankcase and under the exhaust should improve cooling while a new air cleaner setup will make the new saws breathe better and run cleaner for longer. Another surprise is that these new saws boast longer run times, due mainly to larger fuel and oil tanks.

Adding to the performance of the 550 XP Mark II was the new X-Force bar, which is lighter and stronger, and the new X-Cut SP33G chain, available now in the UK although the saws will not come with this chain out of the box. The 545 gets an easy-start system and has heated handles as an option. A comparison of the two new saws is that while the 545 looks to have been favoured with some options, it is a less powerful saw and is probably likely to find favour with less demanding users, while the 550 XP is so capable it would appear to be straying into 560 territory, especially with the G model available to UK users.

*Both chainsaws will be available in stores from April 2019. Prices start from £710 inc VAT.*



Top: Anton Pettersson putting the 550XP Mark II to work.

Above inset: The horizontal felling sight.

Right: Attendees were able to put the saws to the test.



### Facts about 550 XP Mark II / 550 XP G Mark II

Low Vib  
Air Injection  
X-Torq  
AutoTune  
Heated handles and carburettor (only 550 XP G Mark II)  
Engine displacement: 50.1 cm<sup>3</sup>  
Power output: 3.0 kW  
Chain speed at 133% of peak power rpm: 26.1 m/s  
Recommended bar length: 33–50 cm/13"–20"  
Weight: 5.3/5.5 kg (excluding cutting equipment)

### Facts about 545 Mark II / 545G Mark II

Low Vib  
Smart Start  
Air Injection  
X-Torq  
AutoTune  
Heated handles and carburettor (only 545 G Mark II)  
Engine displacement: 50.1 cm<sup>3</sup>  
Power output: 2.7 kW  
Max chain speed: 25.4 m/s  
Recommended bar length: 33–50 cm/13"–20"  
Weight: 5.3/5.5 kg (excluding cutting equipment)