McLAREN
Manufacturer of Tracks and Tires

Hydraulic Direct Drive vs. Gear-Driven Skid Steer Brush Cutters



When choosing a brush cutter, it’s important to consider which hydraulic drive will best suit your application. Currently, there are two main options to choose from: hydraulic direct and gear-driven. This helpful guide will address some of the key differences between hydraulic direct drive vs. gear-driven skid steer brush cutters so that you can determine which one will work best for you.

Application: Commercial vs. Residential

One of the biggest differences between hydraulic direct drive and gear-driven brush cutters is their ideal application. While they are both useful for cutting down tall grass fields, a hydraulic drive brush cutter will be able to slice through larger objects more easily and without experiencing damage. When a hydraulic drive brush cutter encounters a larger growth such as a sapling, the motor on the machine will slow down to avoid damage and then speed back up again once the obstacle has been cleared. On the other hand, a gear-driven brush cutter would likely incur damage when going over larger growths.

Because hydraulic drive brush cutters are more capable of encountering large, unexpected obstacles, they are an ideal option for commercial land-clearing applications where one needs to tackle a variety of different lots. For residential applications in which you are familiar with the area that you will be clearing, however, a gear-driven brush cutter should do the trick.

Cost Difference

As previously stated, hydraulic-driven brush cutters can tackle larger overgrowth without incurring damage. However, such a capability comes at a cost. Due to the added protection that they provide, hydraulic-driven

brush cutters have a higher price tag than their gear-driven counterparts.

As such, if you are just starting out and don't have a lot of different lots to cut or are only using it a few times a month, it will likely make more sense to opt for a gear-driven brush cutter from a financial standpoint. In doing so, you will likely get the most amount of value for your money, as gear-driven brush cutters are both efficient and affordable.

Maintenance Requirements

Another slight difference between hydraulic direct drive vs. gear-driven skid steer brush cutters is the amount of maintenance that they require. Ultimately, a gear-driven brush cutter will require a little less maintenance, as you won't need to add gear oil to the gear. It is very rare that you would need to add gear oil to the gears of a hydraulic-driven brush cutter—usually only around once every two years—so the additional maintenance requirement is negligible. Also, with less moving parts, a direct drive motor will have increased longevity vs a gear driven motor.

McLaren Industries offers exceptional quality skid steer brush cutters with both hydraulic direct drives and gear drives. To learn more about our industry-leading attachments, contact us today at (800) 836-0040, or click here to request a quote.