

Hose nozzle testing for Sydney Water

Summary of findings

Sydney Water recently commissioned CHOICE to test a range of multi-function hose nozzles, including multifunction gun nozzles and wand nozzles. We did this to find out:

- how much water these nozzles use on various settings
- how durable they are
- how easy they are to use.

See www.choice.com.au/testresearch Report – hose nozzles 176542 for full details of the testing.

Models tested

CHOICE tested a range of models of varied prices and design. This included six gun nozzles and two wand nozzles, plus the Fern Touch Flow wand which has a single, low-flow setting.

Models tested:

- Aqua Systems Multi-Function Plastic Watering Gun 2114 AS
- Gardena Comfort Multi Sprayer 18315
- Holman 8 Function Gun 2115H
- Kmart (Anko) 7 Function Spray Gun
- Nylex 7-Function Spray Gun 711442
- Pope Deluxe Hand Spray 1010864
- Pope Flexi Multi Function Watering Wand
- Big W (Garden Sense) Water Wand 57798
- Fern Touch Flow Watering Wand

Summary

Price and appearance aren't necessarily indicators of how well a nozzle performs, how durable it is or how easy it is to use.

The cheapest multifunction gun nozzle in the test didn't perform significantly worse than the most expensive. Even those that felt particularly 'plasticky' or 'cheap' performed reasonably well and survived the durability test.

As for which settings used the least water, the **mist** setting uses the least water (about 2L/min), followed by the **fan** (also called **flat** or **vertical**) at about 7L/min.

Hose nozzle features

Trigger lock lets you lock the trigger in place so you don't need to hold it down while watering.

Water flow control adjusts the output flow volume. Usually a thumb-operated switch or lever.

Most of these models have a single O-ring on the hose connector but the Holman has two O-rings. We didn't notice any advantage in having two O-rings.

Water usage

Which one uses the most water?

Generally, the highest flow rates (how many litres of water the nozzle uses per minute) are on the **jet**, **shower** or **cone** settings, which typically use 12 to 13L/min.

You might expect that the high-power jet setting, useful for cleaning dirt off hard surfaces, would deliver the highest flow rate but in fact this was only true for the Nylex nozzle. For most of the tested nozzles, the **shower** setting uses the most water per minute.

Which one uses the least water?

The Fern Touch Flow Water Wand has the lowest flow rate at 1.7L/min but there are compromises. This water wand is meant to reduce water waste by only watering where needed, but, it has only one setting. You release a gentle drizzle or trickle of water by touching the end of the wand to the surface to be watered. It's suitable for spot watering plants in garden beds or pots, but is not practical for watering a large area. It also performed poorly in the durability tests.

Water saving tip:

To reduce your water use, try watering with the mist or fan setting if your nozzle has one. You still need to keep the watering time short. There's no point using a more economical water flow and then watering longer, as you could end up using the same amount of water, or even more.

Durability

We tested the nozzles by dropping them 10 times from shoulder height onto concrete.

Which gun nozzles survived?

Most of the gun nozzles survived this with nothing more than a few scuffs or scratches.

The Gardena had some minor damage; its trigger came off, but could be reattached easily and it stayed in place for the rest of the test and the nozzle was fully functional afterwards.

Which wands didn't do so well?

The Pope and Big W wands both had some minor damage, having small leaks from their nozzles and the Big W losing its plastic hook loop. Both still worked okay.

The Fern wand suffered the most. Its watering head came off (but could be slid back onto the wand) and the hose connection end started leaking significantly. The wand was leaking so badly by the end of the test that it was unusable.

How easy are the hose nozzles to use?

Two men and one woman (including a left-hander) assessed the nozzles for their ease of use. They considered how:

- easy it was to connect and remove the nozzle to and from a hose fitting
- comfortable the grip and trigger are
- easy it is to change settings
- easy it is to use the on/off or trigger lock.

Was it easy for both left and right handers?

These multifunction gun nozzles are designed with both right and left-handed users in mind, with most functions centrally located.

The Gardena, Holman, Nylex and Pope gun nozzles rated as the easiest to use overall.

Wands can be easier in some situations, such as watering hanging plants.

Was it easy for those with weak hands or arthritis?

The Holman rated worst overall for grip comfort and difficulty of squeezing the trigger. The female trialist also rated the Aqua Systems trigger as hard to squeeze. For people with weak hands or arthritis, these two may not be suitable.

We recommend you try the triggers in store before buying, to find one that that's comfortable for you to use.

All the tested trigger guns have a trigger lock mechanism, so it's not necessary to hold the trigger down all the time while watering.