

What length of handle do I need for my BroadFork?

Good question!

I'm over 1.8m (6ft) tall and I have used the 1.2m (4ft) handles for several years – before we had the 1.5m (5ft) ones available – and I certainly would not change for the longer ones now. I find that the 1.2m (4ft) handles are just the right height for me to roll my hands over the top to push the handles back a little more at the end of the stroke, just giving that extra bit of lift to the loosened soil.

Having said that, the customer who first enquired about 1.5m handles in late 2017 is shorter than me but wanted longer handles. (As a result of his enquiry, we asked our supplier if he could make them for us and we have been stocking them since December 2017.)

In theory, they could be better for use in heavier, more compacted soil, as they will definitely give more leverage IF you grip them at the top. For me, that would mean reaching UP rather than reaching forward, which I would find uncomfortable.

May I suggest that you watch the little video that we have on our BroadFork page? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lfa1h4T2UYc> It's by an American called Larry Cooper who makes fairly similar BroadForks and has prepared this simple video. (Other than that, we have no connection with him.) His BroadForks have 1.2m handles. Obviously, I don't know how tall he is, but just look at his forearms as he uses it. If you stand with your arms in the same sort of position, then you can check what height your hands are above ground level.

My guess is that they will be at about 1.2m, even if you are 1.8m tall. If your hands end up significantly higher than that, you may want the 1.5m handles. But while you are there with a tape measure, try putting your arms forward in a similar position but reaching up to 1.5m, then imagine pulling back from that height. If that seems like a good angle, then again you may prefer the 1.5m ones. If that's a bit too high, stick with the 1.2m ones.

You'll also see in the video that Larry rolls his hands over the tops of the handles at the end of the stroke, the same as I do. I probably got the idea from his video!

Apologies if you wanted a formula for an answer!

Do make contact if you have any more questions . . .

Dave Taylor, January 2021

Blackberry Lane BroadForks are manufactured by
Malcolm Johnson at Newtimber Forge, West Sussex and sold by
Blackberry Lane (Dave & Val Taylor)
Tel: 07792 592068
Wilanson, Lapford, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6LY, U.K.
www.blackberrylane.co.uk blackberrylane.co.uk@gmail.com