



Renting (leasing) a Robotic Mower Instead of Buying It: A Smart Alternative?

Is it cheaper to rent a robotic mower than to buy it? Or are there any other advantages to renting a robotic mower? Take a look at this, here is what we've found.

Is it better to rent a robotic mower than to buy one? Renting a robotic mower can be advantageous in terms of costs, especially for avoiding high purchase costs. Further advantages are the extensive services available to you, such as monthly servicing or immediate replacement in case of a defect. Whether it is worthwhile from the cost factor depends on the expected service life of a purchased device.

How exactly do the costs stack up over a mower's lifetime? What all do you have to calculate? Which services are offered to you if you rent instead of buy? Is it all worth it financially? On which factors does it depend?

There are really many questions that we've have tried to answer.

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Is it worthwhile to rent a robotic mower instead of buying one?

With cars, it is considered an insider tip to lease cars instead of buying them, because due to the high drop in prices and various other factors, leasing is more cost-effective than buying.

When I heard about this, I asked myself whether robotic mowers could also be "leased" and whether there would also be a cost advantage here.

First of all, it should be said that, as far as leasing is concerned, robotic mowers and cars cannot really be compared, since robotic mowers are far from having such a dramatic after-purchase drop in price as cars. In the case of the latter, a number of factors related to sales structures and other things lead to an enormous initial drop in prices.

But how is it with Mr Green robotic mowers? What are the rental offers and are they worthwhile?

There are not very many robotic mower rentals yet, but of the few that exist and thought about whether it is cheaper or better value than outright buying something.

For example, this website offers robotic lawn mowers for rent, which I would like to use for our calculation example. For a lawn size between 250m² and 1000m², they estimate a price of \$159 per month.

For our example I'll be assuming a lawn size of 1200m². To do the job in a reasonable time you would need a Mr Green AN3000v. It mows lawn sizes of up to 3000m². However, this figure assumes that



the mower is in operation (mowing or charging) for 24 hours. So for 1200m² it would need about 12 hours of operation each day.

Costs and conditions for the robotic lawn mower leasing

- Monthly rental price (gst inc): \$129 (12 months during the year)
- One-time setup fee: \$300.00
- Lawn size: 1200m²

The following advantages are also included in the offer (taken from the machinemowers.com website):

- Mr Green Leasing Plan runs annually and includes monthly servicing and monthly lawn edging trimming
- No burying a Boundary Wire
- Robot Cuts Around 95-99% of the Property
- We Install and Setup the Robot Mower. We can also organise a electrician to install a certified outside power outlet.
- Regular Robot Upkeep and Maintenance
- Requires Annual Service Contract

The offer is really understood in such a way that the complete maintenance, including the monthly cleaning, as well as exchange of the blades and lawn edging trims etc. is completely taken care of. That means you really don't have to worry about anything anymore.

Cost of purchasing the equivalent HUSQVARNA mower

And here is a comparison of the cost of buying a robotic lawn mower that would do the same job, without all the above mentioned extra services. Mr Green Rental AN3000v vs Husqvarna Mower

- MSRP: \$5,500,00
- Installation costs: \$400 (1200m²)
- Annual repair and maintenance costs: \$400
- Work hours for repair and maintenance: 6 hours/year (at \$40 per hour = \$240)
- New battery every 4 years: \$120/year

The recommended retail price of an equivalent HUSQVARNA is \$5,500,00, as you can see above. However, you may get the mower at a lower price on sale or second hand.

If you do not install the robotic mower yourself, you need an installation service. Since this is also included in the rental offer, I include this in the calculation. For an area of 1200m² you can count on about \$400. For smaller areas it maybe less, and for larger areas it is perhaps more.

HUSQVARNA mowers are a reasonable quality robotic mower and not cheap products, so they won't break down so quickly. However, they do have their own defects. Also they need their blades replaced every month, which is why I have set the annual cost of maintenance and repair at \$400.



You also need to account for the working hours for maintaining the robot. It needs cleaning each or every second week, depending on weather conditions. The blades need to be replaced on a regular basis. Problems occur with any mower which is time consuming. 6 hours per year should be considered for this. If you take an hourly rate of \$40 that would be \$240.

If you have purchased a boundary wire model or guide wire may also become defective or need replacing. Especially if the installation has been in operation for several years, such defects become more frequent. Such a repair is costly, because you have to find the defective spot – in reality the repair costs should increase more with time, but for simplicity's sake we will assume a flat rate of \$300 annually (this is not in our calculation but as a note to buyers).

Moreover, the battery has to be replaced approximately every 4 years and costs around \$480. So that would be \$120 per year. You can also save these costs if you go the rental route.

Comparison of cost over time

For the cost development I have now compared the rental costs with the purchase price plus costs for defects and come to the following conclusion.

So for the first 5 years it is cheaper to rent a robotic mower. From then on the whole thing turns in favour of the purchased robotic mower. By then, the rental costs will have accumulated enough that you could have bought a robotic mower for the same money and in addition you could have paid the costs for and regular repairs.

Then we're good, right? Unfortunately not.

There is a whole series of factors that we have not considered here. If you buy a robotic mower, then you own this product and you can sell it after a certain period of time.

Cost development including the resale value

Above we have only looked at the accumulation of cost over time, but this does not include the final financial impact at the end of your use of the mower. When you buy the robotic mower, it is yours. You will not have to eventually return it, and it will still have a certain value for which you can sell it again.

We have to deduct this value from the invoice. The real cost you will have to pay is the price drop of the device. I have assumed a successively decreasing price drop, which is a bit "stronger" at the beginning and then slower with time.

Year Price drop est.

1st year \$ 1800

2nd year \$ 1000

3rd year \$ 600

4th year \$ 500

5th year \$ 300

6th year \$ 300

7th year \$ 200



8th year	\$ 190
9th year	\$ 180
10th year	\$ 160

So if you were to sell your robotic mower again after a certain period of use.

Well, now we have it, don't we?

Well, not exactly. After all, it is possible that the robotic mower will break down after a certain period of time through no fault of your own. At the beginning, robotic mowers usually have a warranty, usually for 2 years, sometimes up to 5. But then the warranty usually ends.

Cost development assuming a final defect after 7 years

So it could be that your robotic mower simply gives up the ghost after 7 years and is then worth nothing. Then you can no longer sell it. Basically, it is no different than if you had rented it for the time being and then returned it after 7 years.

For my account, I now assume the same re-sale price drop as above, with the entire remaining value of the device expiring at once in year 7.

Year Price drop est

1st year \$ 1800

2nd year \$ 1000

3rd year \$ 800

4th year \$ 500

5th year \$ 400

6th year \$ 300

7th year \$ 700

The device suddenly no longer has any value from the 7th year onwards, as it becomes defective and repair is either no longer worthwhile or no longer possible.

At first you are off a lot better than with a rental. As soon as the robotic mower breaks down the gap between the cost of buying and the cost of renting decreases, even though it still favors the buying option.

Of course, all this is just based on rough estimates. Your actual costs might look differently and it might also be that your robotic lawn mower never breaks down. I've heard from owners that still run a HUSQVARNA robotic lawn mower from the 90's. With the right care, a robotic lawn mower can last for quite a while, at least if it's a HUSQVARNA robotic lawn mower, which are known for their high quality.

So which is better? Rent or buy. Which is better for you?

It seems that in the long run it is a lot better to buy a robotic lawn mower than to rent one, from a cost perspective. With the above calculation, the initial cost of buying a robotic lawn mower has been recouped for after 5 years.



However, renting a robotic mower brings further advantages. You do not have to worry about the robotic mower being defective. While with a purchased robotic mower you would have to send in the mower yourself or deliver it to a contract dealer, with a rented robotic mower it is simply picked up. And you get a new one immediately, while you would otherwise have to wait until your robotic mower comes back from the repair shop.

Many people buy a robotic mower because they want less work with the lawn. But robotic mowers can require some work themselves, even if not much - That can be very annoying.

Advantages of renting a robotic mower

- Even less work than you already have
- Your robotic mower will be taken care of
- You have no trouble with repairs and maintenance: the device is simply replaced on site
- Installation of the robotic mower is usually cheaper than third-party installation services
- Maintenance of the robotic mower included

Disadvantages of renting a robotic mower

- Higher costs after 5 years - than buying one
- Lesser flexibility in tailoring the robotic lawn mower exactly to your wants
- You are always reliant on the Mr Green Lawnmower rental service

For someone who wants to have extremely little work sip coffee while watching their robotic mower, it can therefore be a great alternative to simply rent the machine and have Mr Green take care of the proper operation of the machine.

So the advantages of renting a robotic mower are clearly the extra comfort and the fact that you will have even less work than you already do. This way the robotic mower really does run almost by itself.

However, in many cases it can be a lot cheaper to simply buy your own robotic lawn mower, especially for small yards. There you can usually find lesser sophisticated cheaper models that also do the job (but might not last for 7+ years). For example, if you have a small yard, a much cheaper device would be possible, such as one of these devices that I recommend for small yards.

Summary - Final remarks

I think I was able to give you a pretty good comparison. The calculation is subjective of course -not super accurate and I left out many other factors, such as interest rate effects or inflation etc.

I would appreciate your opinions on this cost comparison. Even if you would evaluate the cost of one or the other differently.

Ka Kite – Mr Green Tauranga - Give us a call to discuss the comparison further.