

What is a Pick Mattock?

A mattock has a shaft, typically made of wood, which is about 3–4 ft long. The head consists of two ends, opposite each other and separated by a central eye. A mattock head typically weighs 3–7 lb.

A **pick mattock** has a head that combines a pick and adze. The pick is rarely sharpened and the adze is sometimes sharpened. This is one of the best tools for grubbing in hard soils and rocky terrain.



In the eastern United States, the shafts of mattocks are often fitted with a screw below the head and parallel with it to secure the head from slipping down the shaft. The mattock head ought never be raised higher than the user's hands, so that it will not slide down and hit the user's hands. The mattock is meant for swinging between the user's legs, as in digging a ditch with one foot on either side.

As a simple but effective tool, mattocks have a long history. Their shape was already established by the Bronze Age in Asia Minor and ancient Greece. The word mattock is of unclear origin; one theory traces it from Proto-Germanic, from Proto-Indo-European. – [From Wikipedia.org](#)

The Spooky Beaver Trail Crew utilizes pick mattocks to build new trails and install water diversion devices such as waterbars and check dams on existing trails. They are ideal for use in compacted, rocky or root bound soil. This tool makes it much easier to dig down into the soil to create or modify a trail.

Check back here often as we will be describing various tools that the Spooky Beavers utilize when doing trailwork in Prince William Forest Park, VA.