



THE VICTORINOX FIELDMASTER:

The Tiny Toolbox That Never Quits.

by David Oliver #2360 W1040
Board Member & PSAR Committee Chair

Some gear needs to be replaced every season; the Victorinox Fieldmaster does not. I have carried mine through years of countless hikes, winter treks, and low-altitude winter mountaineering, and not once has it failed me. It has never cracked, never dulled, never quit. The blade still opens with that clean, satisfying click that makes you want to flick it open again just to hear it.

Over the years, I have owned several Swiss Army knives, and every single one has proven reliable. But the Fieldmaster is my favorite because it strikes the perfect balance of weight, simplicity, and usefulness. It is small enough to forget in your pocket yet solid in your hand. The red handle is classic and bright enough that if you drop it in the snow, leaves, or mud, you'll spot it instantly. It does not blend in like all those matte-gray tactical tools everyone is obsessed with. It stands out, which is a really good thing. If you ever lose your pack in bad weather or drop your knife while setting up a stove in the dark, that flash of red might just save you.

The design is simple genius. Two blades that never seem to dull, a wood saw that could put some full-size ones to shame, a Phillips screwdriver, two flatheads, a can opener, a bottle opener, scissors that are sharper than most kitchen pairs, and the little extras like the tweezers and toothpick that somehow never fall out. Every tool snaps open with that tight, confident precision Victorinox has perfected for generations. It is simple, compact, and just feels good to use.

During the 2023/2024 winter season, I decided to see how far I could push it. I gave myself a challenge: eighty-one miles of solo trail maintenance in the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon,

completed within one winter season, using only my Swiss Army Knife. No folding saw, no pruning shears, and nothing else allowed.

I set a rule for myself that I would only remove obstacles under about three inches thick. Anything larger got GPS-marked for follow-up maintenance later. It was deep winter, cold, icy, and windy, the kind of weather that makes metal stick to your gloves. Every branch I cut, from thin frozen whips to thick, dense, half-frozen limbs, was cut with that tiny red knife. I cleared every obstruction, every tangle, every blowdown within that size limit.

By the end of the season, I had cut hundreds of branches. The saw's teeth were still sharp, still biting cleanly. It never slipped or chipped. I will admit, when the branches hit that three-inch mark, I did wish for something bigger. But that little saw earned my full respect.

The Fieldmaster is also one of the few tools that has not been ruined by modern marketing. These days, the internet is flooded with so-called multi-tools: oversized, heavy hunks of cheap steel plastered with brand names nobody has ever heard of. They look tactical and serious, yes, but most of them are junk. They rust after one wet trip, their hinges loosen, their blades snap, and half the attachments you will never touch. They are made to look impressive in photos, not to actually work in the field.

The Fieldmaster is not like that. It is lighter, simpler, and a hundred times tougher. At around \$50, it is cheaper than most of the flashy, overbuilt tools you will find online. It is the kind of tool you can actually rely on.

One smart thing to keep in mind is that you cannot fly with it. TSA will confiscate it immediately. I almost lost mine once flying out west but managed to mail it home just in time. Now, I always leave it in my checked bag or ship it ahead. It is worth the trouble because I would rather leave behind a jacket than that knife.



THE VERDICT

Build Quality:	9/10
Usefulness:	10/10
Maintenance:	8/10
Value:	10/10
Overall:	9.5/10

It's not flashy or tactical. It's just what works.

The Victorinox Fieldmaster is available directly from Victorinox.com or Amazon.com, usually priced around \$50 with free shipping or returns. It's not a rare piece of gear you have to hunt for. You can order it in minutes and have it in your hand in a few days.

Full disclosure: I have no financial interest in Victorinox or any related company, and I receive no payment or commission for this review. I included Amazon as a purchase option because it is convenient for most people, but I do not earn any income or affiliate revenue from that link.

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