ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Sway

The Insider's Guide

i3-compatible tiling Wayland compositor



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among window managers and launchers, read from Sway's own pages.

Made by Sway project · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.6
GPA



Contents

01 Welcome
What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

02 What it costs
Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

03 What it does
Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

04 Where it stands
Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

05 The alternatives
The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side

06 Quick answers
The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

07 About ToolGPA
Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Sway's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Sway's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.6

GPA, above 23 of the 48 other window managers and launchers we grade

Sway is a tiling Wayland compositor presented as a drop-in replacement for the i3 window manager. It works with an existing i3 configuration and supports most of i3's features plus some extras. It is documented through manpages and published under the MIT license.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Sway**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> "
>
> **No rating on record, and it is set up through a config file and manpages.**
>
> From our grade for ease of use

1 **Best for an i3-style tiling setup on Wayland**

It runs only on Wayland, and setup is a config file with manpages for documentation.

2 **It is free**

Sway has no paid plan at all.

3 **It runs on Linux**

Linux.

4 **i3 compatibility**

Reads existing i3 configuration and supports most i3 features.

5 **Tiling grid**

Arranges windows logically in a grid by default, controllable from the keyboard.

6 **Wayland compositor**

Runs as a Wayland compositor rather than on X11.

7 **A 2.6 GPA, above 23 of 48**

That is against the other window managers and launchers we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

Sway is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

Sway at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN It is free
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Linux
MADE BY Sway project	CATEGORY Window Managers & Launchers
OUR GRADE 2.6 GPA, good	

The report card

Best for an i3-style tiling setup on Wayland

Sway is a free tiling Wayland compositor that reads existing i3 configs. It runs only on Wayland, and setup is a config file with manpages for documentation.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Sway	Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	A	Free to download under the MIT license with no paid edition.
Free plan and trial	A	The whole program is free to download and run, with no cap and no paid edition.
Features	B	An i3-compatible tiling grid driven from the keyboard, with nothing missing on the listing for a tiling manager.
Ease of use	D	No rating on record, and it is set up through a config file and manpages.
Platforms and integrations	D	Linux on Wayland only, with no other operating system and no integrations listed.
Grade point average		Good, out of 4.0 **2.6**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Sway is for

- ✓ Fits if you used i3 and are moving to Wayland
- ✓ Works for Linux users who want a plain keyboard-first tiling setup

Who it is not for

- ✗ Skip it if you use Windows or macOS, as the site gives no version for them
- ✗ Not for you if you want graphical settings, since setup is by config file
- ✗ Tight if you are new to Linux, because documentation is mainly manpages
- ✗ Watch out: it is Wayland only, so X11 sessions need i3 instead

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ i3 users moving from X11 to Wayland
- ✓ Linux users who want a plain, keyboard-first tiling setup

Worth knowing

- ⓘ Wayland only; the site gives no Windows or macOS version.
- ⓘ Documentation is mainly manpages, and setup is by config file.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

Sway is free to use.

> **Free to download under the MIT license with no paid edition.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

FREE

$0

Free software; the project publishes its source and lists no paid edition.

Read from swaywm.org on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Linux

i3-compatible tiling Wayland compositor. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, keyboard-first, window management.

> **Linux on Wayland only, with no other operating system and no integrations listed.**

From our grade for platforms and integrations

i3 compatibility

Reads existing i3 configuration and supports most i3 features.

Tiling grid

Arranges windows logically in a grid by default, controllable from the keyboard.

Wayland compositor

Runs as a Wayland compositor rather than on X11.

Manpage documentation

Documented through manpages, with a wiki and support chat linked.

Where it runs

Linux

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

Sway is made by Sway project.

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

23/48

Other window managers and launchers it is graded above

Sway's GPA of 2.6 is higher than 23 of the 48 other window managers and launchers we grade, and level with 11.

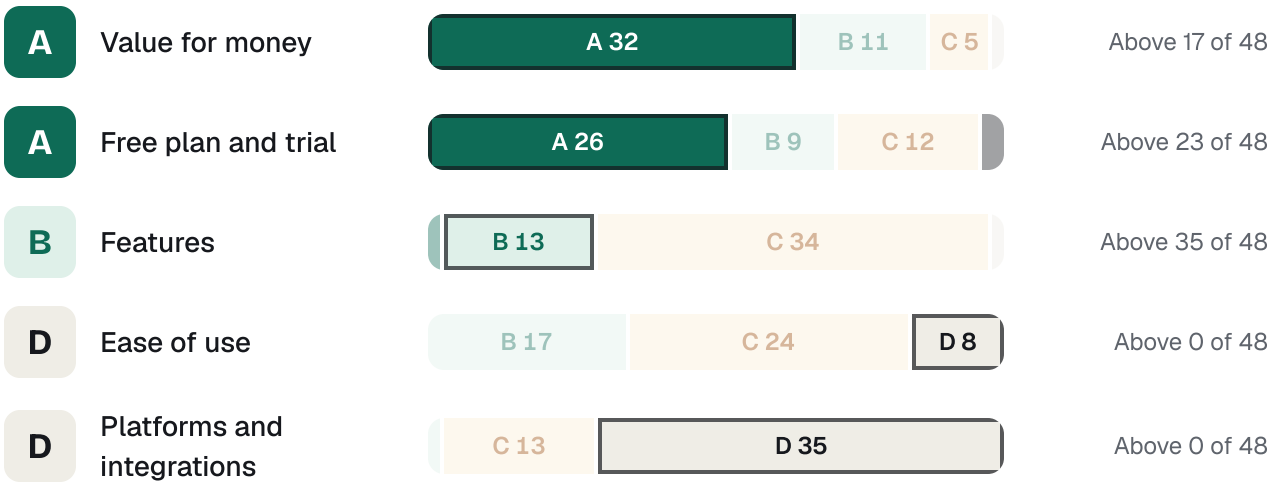
It stands best on free plan and trial (A, above 23 of 48) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

Sway has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 1.7 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

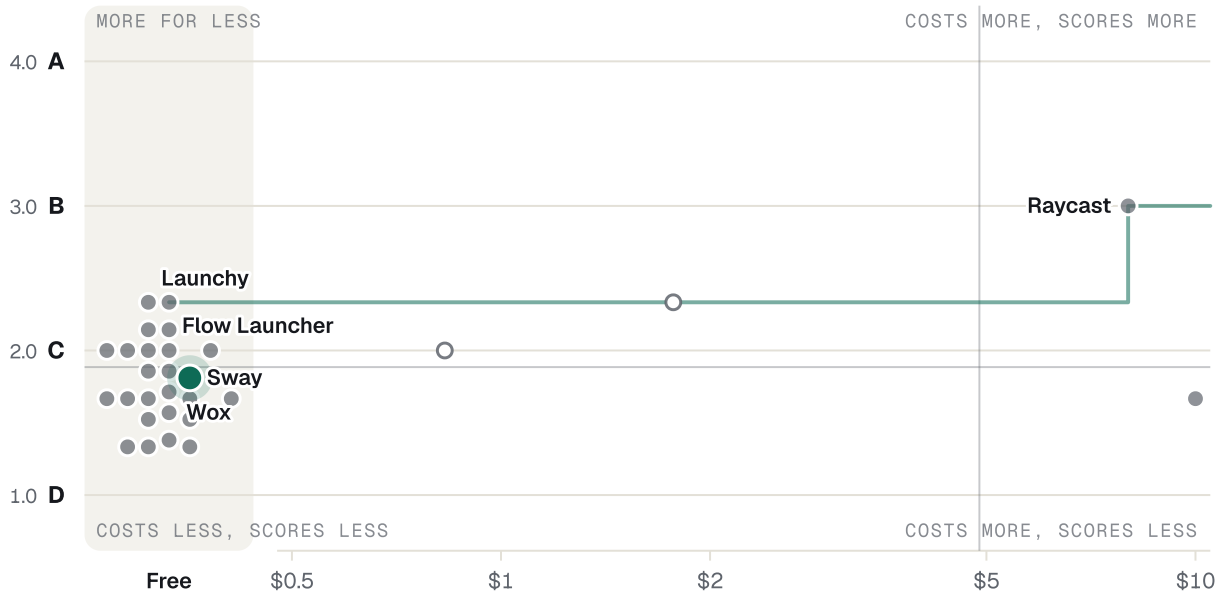
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 49 window managers and launchers we grade, cut by the letter each got. Sway's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 29 window managers and launchers. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. Sway is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

Sway is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

What you could not

- ✕ Control over other apps' windows.
- ✕ A real app for Linux. Something home-made would be a web page.
- ✕ The depth: we grade its features B, which means it covers the whole job.

What this rests on. Sway's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



i3, Hyprland, Awesome, Vicinae and Albert

The 5 tools Sway is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.



2.6 GPA

i3

Free

Tiling window manager for X11 on Linux and BSD.

Sway and i3 compared in full



2.6 GPA

Hyprland

Free

Dynamic tiling Wayland compositor with animations.

Sway and Hyprland compared in full

A

2.4 GPA

Awesome

Free

Lua-configurable framework window manager for X.

Sway and Awesome compared in full



2.8
GPA

Vicinae

Free

Keyboard-driven launcher for Linux, macOS and Windows.

- Only Vicinae lists macOS and Windows apps.
- Vicinae also covers launcher, clipboard manager and calculator.

Sway and Vicinae compared in full



2.6
GPA

Albert

Free

Plugin-based keyboard launcher for Linux and macOS.

- Only Albert lists a macOS app.
- Sway is open source, according to its own site.
- Sway also covers window management.

Sway and Albert compared in full

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

11

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Sway free?

Yes. Sway is free to use.

How much does Sway cost?

Sway lists one plan. Free: $0.

What platforms does Sway work on?

Sway is available on Linux.

Does Sway have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Sway is listed for Linux.

Does Sway have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Sway is listed for Linux.

Is Sway open source?

Yes. Sway is open source, according to its own site.

Who makes Sway?

Sway is made by Sway project.

What are the alternatives to Sway?

The closest alternatives to Sway in our directory are i3, Hyprland, Awesome, Vicinae and Albert.

How does Sway compare with other window managers and launchers?

Sway's GPA of 2.6 is higher than 23 of the 48 other window managers and launchers we grade, and level with 11.

Is Sway good value for money?

ToolGPA grades Sway A for value for money. Sway has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of Sway?

Sway is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Sway's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from the Sway project's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Sway project. Prices change, so check swaywm.org before you buy.

swaywm.org/

github.com/swaywm/sway

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Sway, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/sway

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

```
ToolGPA, "Sway: The Insider's Guide", checked
Nov 13, 2026. https://toolgpa.com/tools/sway
```

Know someone choosing between window managers and launchers?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/sway/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded window managers and launchers after Sway, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Window Managers & Launchers Insider's Guide

Every one of the 49 window managers and launchers we grade, compared

Flow Launcher Insider's Guide

Free, open-source app launcher and file search for Windows

3.0 GPA

Launchy Insider's Guide

Open-source keystroke launcher with plugins and skins

3.0 GPA

Cerebro Insider's Guide

Free open-source Electron launcher for Windows, Mac and Linux

2.8 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Sway's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Sway is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Sway project. Prices and plans change: check swaywm.org before you buy.