Pedestrian, trailed or tractor-mounted using vacuum, flail or brush, the range of cleaning and collecting equipment available has grown dramatically in recent years, with more than 20 manufacturers now offering machines capable of collecting unwanted material from turf.

With the pressure still very much on the purse strings at most golf clubs, versatility is a key factor when considering the best machine for all-round course cleaning and maintenance requirements. Manufacturers have recognised this need and are now offering uprated equipment and additional attachments to extend the year-round work capabilities of their machines.

Amazone's Groundkeeper, acknowledged for its flail mowing and litter, leaf and grass collecting abilities, can now be fitted with a new narrow-profile scarifying blade for improved treatment of thatch on fine turf areas. The 2mm blades, which are reversible, can be used on their own or in conjunction with the mowing flails. Groundkeeper models are available for compact and larger tractors and there is a high-tip version for those needing to carry refuse away by trailer or pick-up.

A high-tip facility, giving a clearance of more than 2m (78in), is said to be a special feature of Bomford's new Barracuda cutter collector, available in 1.2m and 1.5m (4ft and 5ft) working widths for tractors of 35hp upwards. The machines have a full-width height control roller and free-swinging flails which cut, collect and lacerate material before throwing it into the large rear hopper which tips for emptying.

A compact tractor version of the long-established Sisis Litamisa, known appropriately as the Litamina, gives greenkeepers the ability to sweep and collect much nearer to putting areas, due to its narrower working width and 50% lower weight.

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Requiring tractors of 16hp+, the
trailed 1.2m (4ft) wide Litamina
retains the unique Sisis spiral brush
design and has a leading fixed brush
which helps loosen and lift wet leaves
and other flattened material. The hop-
per can be tipped without leaving the
tractor's seat.

Collectors have been available for
some time for use with mid-mounted
rotary mowing decks, the majority
raking on the draught created by the
blades to move grass, leaves and litter
from the deck into the collector. How-
ever, their efficiency is impaired sig-
nificantly in damp conditions.

PeCo, distributed in the UK by
Greenland, produce a range of diesel-
engined vacuum collectors suitable for
use with mid-mounted rotary mowing
decks on compact tractors and with
dedicated out-front rotary mowers
from companies including Ransomes,
Ten. Jacobsen, Ford, John Deere,
Givens and Kubota. Able to operate
in conjunction with the mower or as a
self-propelled grass, leaf and waste
materials collector in its own right,
the PeCo Lawn Vac system has a 1hp
electric-start diesel engine direct driv-
ing an impeller which sucks grass and
other material from the deck into a
hopper. All auxiliary engine controls
are mounted adjacent to the operator
and the 185US (0.8m³) aluminium con-
tainer can be tipped from the driver's
seat.

Self-contained vacuum collectors
were developed originally for use by
turf producers, employing powerful
 suction and wide "hoover-like" heads
to lift and remove damaging clippings
from new and old growth. Over the
past few years, there has been a rash
of developments in this area to give
drivers greater versatility and wider
appeal to the turf maintenance
industry.

Available with capacities of 5.1 and
12.4yd³ (9.5m³), Brouwer's BV 138
and BV 85 trailed units from Turfland
are designed to work behind tractors
of 20 and 35 pto hp respectively. Fea-
tures include flotation tyres, strong
lightweight construction and a low
power requirement, minimizing trac-
tor size and weight and possible sur-
face damage. Both models have
floating suction heads to follow con-
tours accurately, important if maxi-
mum vacuum is to be maintained.
The suction produced by the powerful
fan (dual impellers on the smaller BV
138 machine) is said to be able to
handle debris ranging from thatch
from vertical mowing to grass clip-
pings, leaves, paper, cans and hollow
corings. Options include a suction
hose attachment, enabling the opera-
tor to remove debris from greens, tees
and other areas where the machine
cannot gain access.

Also from North America comes the
two model Tuff Vac range, distributed
by Turftech Machinery. Available in
45 and 8yd³ (3.4 and 6.1m³) capac-
ties, the two machines have moving
bed floors for unloading and fully
floating suction heads. An option
offered by Tuff Vac not available on
the Brouwer machines is a rotary
brush for the suction head. However,
Turftech say that the brush option
accounts for only 10% of sales in the
UK. The reason given is that the brush
reduces working speed and limits the
overall pick-up width, although it is
claimed to be good for lifting wet
leaves. For scarifying, both Turfland
and Turftech prefer a separate opera-
tion ahead of the vacuum collector,
this being faster and cleaner, they say,
eliminating any risk of reseeding de-
thatched material.

The Tuff Vac range comes with 5ft
and 8ft (1.5m and 2.4m) suction
heads, the smaller model also being
available with an auxiliary engine-
driven fan for use behind turf vehicles
and other power units without a pto
or with insufficient horsepower.

Also developed originally for turf
growers is the Dutch-built Trilo vac-
uum sweeper range from MJT Con-
tacts. On the 11m² Clean Sweep, the
company offers a three section scar-
ifier attachment which operates in
front of the floating 2m suction head,
giving it excellent ground-following
characteristics. A powered brush is
available as an option and the machine
has a cab-controlled wander hose
as standard. The 4.5m³ capacity
Trilo Mini Sweep has a brush fitted as
standard to its floating head 1.5m
vacuum head. Alternatively, it can
now be equipped with a scarifier. This
model features high-tip emptying and
is suitable for tractors of 35hp plus.

New from the company at this year's
IoG exhibition is a 7m³ machine
aimed, says Trilo, at the golf course
user. Requiring tractors of 35hp, it has
as options a 2m sweeper head and a
scarifier. Unloading, like its bigger
brother, is by moving floor.

One rare development in the
machinery market is a reduction in
price. However, Landtec Products say
they have been able to cut the cost of
their Promark 1050 Vacuum by more
than 30% thanks primarily to revis-
tions in production methods and cost-

1 The Brouwer BV-85 Vacuum has an
8ft suction pick-up head as a sta-
andard. The 12" diameter wander
hose is spring-balanced.

2 Holding up to 8cu yd of material,
the Tuff Vac 8000 has a two sec-
ction suction head, moving floor
unloading and dual wheels on inde-
pendent hubs to eliminate scuffing
on turns.

3 PeCo Lawn Vac system provides
suction collection on out-front
rotary mowers

4 The Charterhouse Turf Tidy
includes a gutter brush and wide-
angle pto for work in tight corners.

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A clean SWEEP

ings by Ariens, the new owners of Promark machines. The unit, which was developed initially to collect de-thatched material on Californian golf courses, is completely self-contained, having an 18hp petrol engine, 1.5m suction head and 3m suction hose attachment. It can be towed by virtually any power unit, has a 3.6m³ hopper and, in deference to pollution control regulations, runs on unleaded fuel.

For all-round versatility, there are few vacuum sweepers which can surpass the features offered as standard on the British-built GrandswEEP range from Ryetec. The company markets four trailed models with capacities from 1.75m³ to 8m³, suitable for use with tractors from 15hp to 5hp. All are equipped with Goodyear Terra Tires and havepto fans and hydraulically-driven sweeping/scarifying brushes on fully-floating headers incorporating powered lift and height-adjustable wheels.

Wander hoses are standard on all machines which tip hydraulically for unloading. A further benefit is that the wander hose can be connected directly to a mid-mounted mower deck for powered grass collection. An optional gully brush and scarifier are offered also by Ransomes to extend the working versatility of its three ranges of conventional sweepers which come in pedestrian, trailed and ride-on versions. The top-of-the-range 1500 can be specified with an optional water sprinkler system for dust suppression.

Significantly reduced noise is claimed for the new Billy Goat VQ801HP outdoor sweeper from Bob Andrews Limited, making it ideal for work close to golf hotel and resort complexes. The secret, says Ken Salt of Andrews, lies in the use of a new computer-designed impeller which can operate with high efficiency at slower engine speeds. The result is less noise, engine wear and fuel consumption. Self-propelled, with an optional tow-behind “chariot” for the operator, the sweeper has a Honda 8hp petrol engine, 30in vacuum pick-up and 8.76ft (0.25m³) bag capacity.

Said to be the quietest unit currently available, the hand-held Sabre BLV25 Blower/Vac from Hemming and Wood is powered by a 25cc petrol engine producing just 70 decibels at 50ft. Finally, available with a choice of interchangeable sweeping, scarifying or flail heads, the trailed Charterhouse Turf Tidy, has a 5ft (1.5m) working width and is suitable for use with tractors from 20hp upwards, according to the job being carried out. Tipping of the 2.2m³ hopper is hydraulic with a tipped clearance of 5.25ft (1.6m). To minimise the risk of compaction, the machine runs on dual rear wheels. Options include a gutter brush and wide-angle pto for use in tight corners.

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