

Getting the most out of grass and weed trimmers on the golf course

Probably the hottest product on the market in consumer lawn and garden lines the past few years, the flexible-line trimmer has also proven to have broad application in professional turf maintenance and has become a widely used tool on the nation's golf courses. Convenience and safety are its selling points.

The flexible-line trimmer normally has no wheels, but this is the feature that gives it great versatility. Its cutting line will cleanly trim grass and weeds, but yet will not cut through shoes or clothing or an electric cord. If the line should happen to hit bare skin, it may raise a welt or break the skin, but it will not sever a toe or finger as a steel-bladed mower would.

Reportedly invented by a man using an empty popcorn can and a length of fishing line, the flexible-line trimmer has been on the market in the United States since the early '70s. Its principle is simple: an electric motor or a small gasoline engine spins a length of monofilament cutting cord at speeds up to 12,000 revolutions per minute. Most trimmers carry extra line on a reel in the head, and the user pulls out more cord as it is shortened by use. Some models have devices to automatically feed out a new length of cord when the trimmer head is tapped on the ground; most have a built-in cutting edge to trim the cord to optimum cutting length.

Just as the cutting cord will not mutilate the user, it also will cut right up against concrete, rocks, walls, wooden fence posts, or sprinkler heads without cutting, chipping, or otherwise damaging them.

Gasoline-powered trimmers are usually larger, heavier, and more expensive than electric models — but they are not tied by a cord to a power source and, therefore, can be used anywhere on the golf course. Electric models are somewhat cheaper to purchase and operate, and they can easily be used to trim in the vicinity of the clubhouse, pro shop, or maintenance building.

Uses around these buildings are probably familiar to most superintendents: trimming grass and/or weeds along the walls of buildings,

under and around fences, along flower beds, and around trees. The trimmers will also edge grass along walks, patios, driveways, parking lots, and golf car paths. Another use that many greenkeepers may not have thought of: controlling ivy and other ground covers.

Out on the course, maintenance workers can trim right up to trees and fence posts, ball washers, pipes, drinking fountains, and sprinkler heads. They can also use the flexible-line trimmer to put a neat edge around sandtraps and water hazards.

Because of the direction the cutting cord spins, most flexible-line trimmers should be used to trim from right to left to throw dust and clippings away from the operator. For most trimming chores, the cutting head should be tilted to the left at about a 30-degree angle.



Edging along hard paved surfaces requires a slightly different technique. Although conventional blade edgers dig a small trench along the edge of the pavement, an alternate method is to let the grass grow over the trench, then trim it by skimming along the top of the pavement with the flexible-line trimmer.

Holding the cutting plane parallel to the ground, the trimmer can be used for mowing — although it's not comfortable or practical to do large areas this way. Two ways are worth considering for golf course maintenance, however. One is to closely crop the grass around trees, bushes, and posts. This gives a neat appearance and doesn't have to be repeated as often as light trimming. The other mowing application, possible with some models, is on steep banks of bunkers and hillsides where it is difficult to use a conventional mower.

Manufacturers stress the impor-

ance of **not** pulling out and cutting with a length of cord longer than that recommended for your particular make and model of trimmer. Doing so can overload the motor, and the cord can become wrapped around pipes, branches, etc.

While the flexible cutting cord is relatively safe to use, operators should wear sturdy leather shoes, and gloves are a good idea. Because bits of grass or small pebbles can be thrown by the trimmer, operators should wear safety goggles or glasses and should not use the trimmer close to other people. Electrically powered trimmers should not be used in damp or wet areas.

Some manufacturers offer trimmers with special features that enable them to perform tasks in addition to those mentioned above. HMC, for instance, makes some models of its Green Machine with a reduction gearcase at the bottom and optional metal blades that extend use of the trimmer to that of a tree pruner and brush cutter. According to HMC President D. D. Evenson, "This allows the superintendent to clear heavy brush from along fence lines and open fields which are unimproved."

"The brush blade is also excellent for clearing grass along-side ponds and lakes, and also for cutting growth from underwater. The shaft can be placed underwater for cutting with the brush blade. Maintenance should be provided upon completion of this work merely by removing the lower gearcase."

Using the optional metal saw blade on the Green Machine, the superintendent can cut very heavy brush and small trees.

In conclusion, Evenson said, "The reliability of the new two-cycle engines, where backed by appropriate parts and service from the distributor, has made these products some of the most trouble-free pieces of equipment available. This, plus the time saving from use of this tool, has made this a must piece of equipment for the golf course superintendent."

"However," Evenson added, "the superintendent should not attempt to

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continued

get by with just one machine. An 18-hole golf course should have from four to six units in order for the superintendent to properly achieve the overall beautification and maintenance of his course that is now possible by use of

these tools."

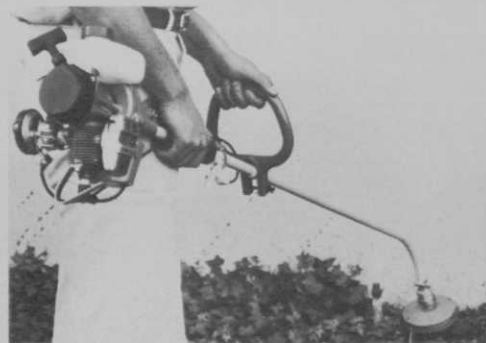
To help interested superintendents investigate the possibilities of flexible-line trimmers, the editors of GOLF BUSINESS present below some examples of the equipment now

available. For further details on any of these trimmers, just **circle the proper number on the "free information card" in the front of this magazine**, fill in the requested information, and mail the card.

Showcase: grass and weed trimmers

Homelite

Model ST100 gas-powered trimmer features the exclusive "Idle-Line" string advancing system which automatically feeds additional string to the trimmer when the engine idles. With a 1.3-horsepower engine, the edger cuts a 20-inch path and can operate 35 to 45 minutes on a pint of fuel. The trimmer weighs 7 1/4 pounds and stores up to 75 feet of .095-inch-diameter cutting string. **Circle 232**

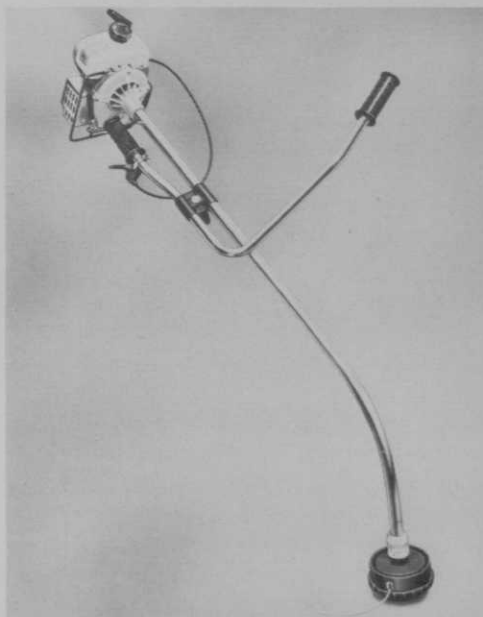


HMC

An economical gas-powered unit, the Green Machine model 1900 string-trimmer features a simple but effective manual-feed cutting head. Other standard equipment includes a flexible enclosed driveshaft and a multi-position molded handle. The machine weighs about 30 pounds and is equipped with a 14.9-cubic-centimeter engine and two .080-inch-diameter cutting strings. **Circle 236**

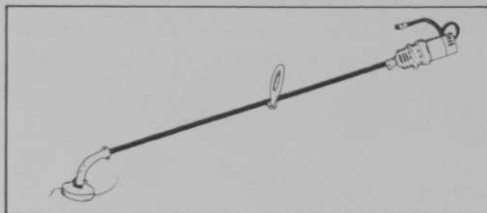
Garden Pro Inc.

Super Spintrim, a gas-powered edger-trimmer, has standard features that include a .164-inch serrated dual cutting line, snorkel air cleaner, and variable speed control with safety stop switch. An adjustable circular handle and a scientifically designed "S" curve shaft provide for lightweight handling. The unit is powered by a 31.11-cubic-centimeter engine. **Circle 237**



Allegretti and Co.

A gas-powered nylon cord trimmer, Paramount model 8021, features a 21-cubic-centimeter Kioritz two-cycle engine. The unit cuts a 17-inch path with a heavy-duty, .080-inch-diameter nylon cord. It also offers automatic line feed, trigger throttle control, and an adjustable shoulder strap which enables the user to keep both hands free during operation. **Circle 239**



Columbia Products Co.

An electric nylon cord edger, the model 2000EW-2 Grasswand is a 9-pound machine which features a high-speed 1/3-horsepower engine with a specially designed planetary gearbox. The .080-inch diameter cutting line rotates at 6,200 rpm. **Circle 233**



Gielow Co.

Trim-It has been developed for those who would rather push than carry a nylon cord trimmer. The two-wheel upright unit, powered by a 3-horsepower Briggs engine, is particularly useful for trimming sand traps because its patented frame enables the operator to tilt the head in any direction. Reloading the cutting line is fast and easy without the need for disassembly. **Circle 238**



Weed Eater, Inc.

Model 700 Series Nylon-Line Trimmer Attachment converts a lightweight chain saw into a heavy-duty line trimmer. The unit will adapt quickly and easily to the majority of lightweight chain saws currently on the market, providing the superintendent with two versatile tools for a minimum investment. The trimmer attachment weighs 5 1/2 pounds and has a 17-inch cutting width. **Circle 235**