

LM REPORTS

Blower's future as landscape tool lies in hands of 'polite' operators

■ The worth of any power blower lies in how much and how well it moves things—leaves, clippings, water, litter, debris, etc.

Increasingly, homeowners and green industry professionals alike find new uses for these portable blowers. In 1980 about 50,000 gasoline-powered blowers were sold. Last year, about 700,000.

Two of the first questions most prospective buyers ask of a particular unit is: (1) How powerful is the blower? and (2) How much can it move and how fast?

Then they might ask about weight and operator comfort (particularly with a back-

WALK-BEHIND COMMERCIAL BLOWERS

Company	Model/Wt.	Displacement/power	Features
Atwater Strong PO Box 1108, Akron, OH 44309 216-630-9822	8-K Lo-Blo Air Broom	16 hp	Kohler Deluxe K-181-T cast iron engine, recoil start, satellite exhaust valve, 225 mph, 741 cfm.
Ber-Vac 2835 chemin de l'aéroport, Thetford Mines, Quebec, Canada, G6G 5R7 418-338-6153	Debris Blower	PTO-driven	400 lbs., 35 inches wide, 35 inches high, 40 inches long, quick attach coupler at both ends, rotates in 220-degree arc, controlled from tractor seat, easy installation.
Billy Goat Industries 1803 S. Jefferson, Lee's Summit, MO 64063 816-542-9666	 OB 1600	8 hp	Twin-cylinder engine, hydrostatic rear wheel drive, powerful 14-blade fan.
Cushman Inc. 900 N. 21 St., PO Box 82409 Lincoln, NE 68501 800-2280-4444	Promark Blower FMB-C	PTO driven	450 lbs., 180 degree chute rotation, 250 mph, 2600 cfm.
D.E. Wolfe Metal Fab. 2555 Leechburg Road, Lower Burrell, PA 15068 412-339-7790	 Saxon Blower-Vac	PTO driven	Capacity to blow 10 to 15 feet under normal conditions, 80" wide, 71" high, 104" long, operated completely from tractor seat.
Deere & Company John Deere Road, Moline IL 61265 309-752-4459	 529/ 165 lbs.	5.2 hp	Vacuum/blower, 30-inch front nozzle, nozzle height from 1/2 to 4 inches, pivoting front axle, 110 mph.
Encore Mfg. Co. 2415 Ashland Ave., Beatrice, NE 68310 402-223-4103	 Pro-Line	8 hp	6-bladed impeller for noise abatement, heavy-duty front caster and pneumatic rear wheel, adjustable chute.

mph = air discharge speed

cfm = cubic feet per minute (area clearance)

dba = decibel rating

pack model), reliability, the availability of parts and/or service, fuel capacity, and, depending upon where they intend to use them, noise level.

If power was the only consideration, power blowers could be made to literally move the world.

But, landscape service—like life—isn't that simple.

Suppliers must provide machines that can blow away material, but also machines that are quiet enough to be used in residential neighborhoods. Near homes with open windows. Near patios. Near relaxing neighbors.

Power blowers are frowned upon by some people in some communities. Most of the unhappiness with blowers—and the resulting media—has been concentrated in California. At least 12 communities there have banned blowers. Another 30 communities limit their use.

More and more, anti-power blower feeling is surfacing in neighborhoods—affluent ones usually—in other states. They're likewise passing laws to restrict or outlaw blower use.

The problem: inconsiderate operators.

Sure, mowers, chainsaws and other

Continued on page 19



WALK-BEHIND COMMERCIAL BLOWERS

Company	Model/Wt.	Displacement/ power	Features
Jacobsen Textron 1721 Packard Ave., Racine, WI 53403 414-637-6711	 Front-Mount Unit	PTO driven	350 lbs. 24 sq. in. outlet which rotates 220 degrees, 225 mph, 3,200 cfm, no-tool attachment to Jacobsen Turfcut in minutes.
Landscapers Supply Corp., Inc. PO Box 343 1 Bridge Stg., Garnerville, NY 10923	Commercial 8hp Blower		13-gauge handle, blower housing mig welded, 280 mph, 3200 cfm.
LESCO, Inc. 20005 Lake Road, Rocky River, OH 44116 216-333-9250	 Walk-Behind Blower	8hp	Heavy-gauge steel, 128 lbs., 1.25 gal. fuel capacity, A frame handles, 175 mph, 2500 cfm.
Little Wonder 1028 Street Road, PO Box 38, Southampton, PA 18966 215-357-5110	 10 models of blowers	N/A	12-gauge still housing, seams arc welded for maximum air discharge, 160 mph.
Parker Sweeper Co. 91 Bechtle Ave., PO Box 1728 Springfield, OH 45501 513-323-4901	 Hurricane HC	8 hp	Adjustable air deflector controlled at handle, large tires, self-propelled with 5 forward speeds, neutral and reverse.
Steiner Turf Equipment Penn Ave., Box 85, Orrville, OH 44667 216-683-0055	 PB 100	PTO-driven	95 lbs., 33 inch wide, 8-blade fan, fan speed equals engine RPM, 90 mph blow power.
Tempest Controlled Airstreams 4924 E. Lansing Way, Suite 103, Fresno, CA 93727 800-346-2143	TGB-274-H	13 hp	133 lbs., 27-inch blade, 32 inches high, 30.5 inches wide, 25 inches deep, 15200 cfm, several other gas and electric-driven sizes and models.
Yard Vac Products Inc. 3849 E. Ventura, Fresno, CA 93702 209-251-7125	 Hurryclean 8	8 hp	150 lbs., nozzle adjustable in 3 directions, 150 mph, 5600 cfm, welded steel construction.

BACKPACK COMMERCIAL BLOWERS

Company	Model/Wt.	Displacement/ power	Features
Ariens Company 655W. Ryan St., Brillion, WI 54110 414-756-2141	 BB430/ 24.9 lbs.	43 cc/ (2.3 hp)	Backpack style double harness system and waist strap, transistorized ignition, 218 mph, 540 cu. ft. per minute (cfm).
Atwater Strong Inc. 1355 Evans Ave., Akron, OH 44305 216-630-9822	43-T/ 21 lbs.	43 cc/ (3 hp)	Extra long straps, built-in handle, 225 mph max air speed, 741 cfm.
Carswell Import & Marketing 3750 N. Libery St., Winston-Salem, NC 27105 919-767-9432	FL-411/ 17.6 lbs.	40.2 cc/ (2 hp)	Two-cycle Robin engine with solid state ignition, 186 mph, 385 cfm.
Deere & Co. John Deere Road, Moline, IL. 61265 309-765-9432	5E/ 19.8 lbs.	43.9 cc	Locking blower tubes, 50.7-ounce fuel tank, 180 mph, 388 cfm
Echo Incorporated 400 Oakwood Road, Lake Zurich, IL 60047 708-540-8400	 PB/4600/ 22 lbs.	44 cc	2-quart fuel tank, purge-equipped adjustable diaphragm carburetor, 70 dba, 180 mph, 370 cfm.
Homelite Div., Textron, Inc. 14401 Carowinds Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28273 704-588-3200	 BP 250/ 12.7 lbs.	25 cc	Solid-state ignition, 21-oz. fuel capacity, two-chamber muffler, 69-70 dba, 150 mph, 375 cfm.
LESCO, Inc. 20005 Lake Road, Rocky River, OH 44116 216-333-9250	 LBB 4000/ 22 lbs.	39.7 cc	Electronic ignition, single-cylinder engine, diaphragm carburetor, 180 mph, 388 cfm.
Northeastern Associates 23 "I" Commerce Road, Fairfield, NJ 07004 210-227-0359	Stihl BR 320, BR 400/ 18.5 lbs.	44.9 cc 56.5 cc	Electronic magneto ignition, 3.17 pint fuel capacity, BR 320 has 156 mph, 435 cfm; BR 400 has 170 mph, 476 cfm.
Redmax 1505 Pavilion Place, Norcross, GA 30093 404-381-5150	EBA 440, 22.5 lbs.	41.5 cc	Force-ventilated backpad, electric start, flexible hose pipe extension, solid-state ignition, 180 mph, 570 cfm.
Shindaiwa Inc. PO Box 1090, Tualatin, OR 97062 503-692-3070	 EB-45 21.3 lbs.	41.5 cc 2.3 hp	Extra-large air filter, electronic ignition, diaphragm carburetor with primer pump, 212 mph, 493 cfm.
Snapper Power Equipment 535 Macon Road, PO Box 777, Mc Donough, GA 30253	Snapper Backpack	40.6 cc 3 hp	250 mph, 580 cfm, 75 dba.
Solo Inc. 5100 Chestnut Ave., Newport News, VA 23605 804-245-4228	 449L/ 25 lbs.	5hp	3-gal. fuel capacity, ergonomically designed back pad, antivibration features, 224 mph, 468 cfm.

mph = air discharge speed

cfm = cubic feet per minute (area clearance)

dba = decibel rating

BACKPACK COMMERCIAL BLOWERS

Company	Model/Wt.	Displacement/ power	Features	
 <p>Tanaka Ltd. PO Box 3014 Bothell, WA 98021 206-481-2000</p>	TBL-500/ 24.9 lbs.	43 cc/ 2.3 hp	Transistorized electronic ignition, exclusive backpack frame, cushioned straps, 218 mph, 540 cfm.	
	<p>Teufel Nursery Inc. 12345 NW Barnes Road, Portland, OR 97394 608-429-3402</p>	EB 45/ wt. N/A	41.5 cc/ 2.3 hp	Spark arrester muffler, grooved backpad, 212 mph, 493 cfm.
	<p>Toro Company 8111 Lyndale Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420 612-887-8258</p>	30941	41 cc	Mitsubishi, 2-cycle engine, fingertip starter, backpack pad with adjustable strap, 160 mph.

mph = air discharge speed

cfm = cubic feet per minute (area clearance)

dba = decibel rating

commonly used landscape tools make noise, but it's the turbo-whine of the power blower that causes peoples' teeth to grind. (Presumably the operator is wearing ear protection.). This is particularly true when the machines are run at full power or at inappropriate times.

At least one manufacturer, Echo Inc.,

Zurich, Ill., would like to see noise ordinances based on the American National Standard (ANSI B 175.2/1990). This standard calls for sound measurement at 50 feet in a park-like setting, the blower running full throttle.

Echo also offers a "Be Smart!" program. This program uses posters and supporting literature, a video, and hands-on demonstrations to educate users on the safe and polite use of power blowers.

Meanwhile, manufacturers strive to provide users with *quieter* power blowers.

Let's not over-emphasize the negative side of power blower use though. After all, more than 99.9 percent of American com-

munities have no restrictions on operating them. Green industry professionals—the vast majority anyway—use power blowers sanely. They also use them for a growing number of tasks. That's why power blowers come in such a variety of styles and sizes.

Professionals mostly use backpack and larger models. There are, however, occasions when smaller handheld units can be handy.

The proper use of a power blower, like any other valuable landscape maintenance tool, streamlines otherwise dull and labor-intensive work. In that way, it makes green industry professionals' services more affordable and valuable to customers.

—Ron Hall

DECIBEL SCALE

Decibels



Blower safety precautions

■ The gasoline-powered blower is a simple landscape maintenance tool. It requires no extended training to use effectively.

But every operator should follow these safety precautions when using one:

- Depending on the sound level of the machine, hearing protection may be needed.

- Wear eye protection. These units throw material.

- Do not allow bystanders in the work area.

- Do not point the blower nozzle in the direction of people or pets.

- Do not wear loose clothing,

scarfs, neck chains, etc. that can be drawn into rotating parts.

- Use a face filter mask when operating the blower in dusty conditions.

- Stop the engine before installing or removing attachments. These will help you keep hands and fingers away from rotating parts.

- Do not operate gasoline-powered blowers in unventilated areas.

- Do not smoke while handling fuel.

- Do not refuel a hot or running engine.

- Move at least 10 feet away from the fueling point before starting the engine.