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andscape managers demand power and hauling capacity in their pickup trucks. They say so and so do the truck makers. And when they reach the job site, landscapers demand the same rugged qualities in utility vehicles, most often used to move earth and haul equipment.

Richard Raymond, foreman

says Raymond. Only the largest pickup chassis are capable of hauling a 12,000 pound trailer. However, most three-quarter-ton pickups can handle an 8,000 pound trailer, if properly equipped.

American Design and Landscape in Parker, Colo., specializing in new construction, also relies on heavy-duty pickups. The firm has 45 dual-wheel pickups, all made by Chevrolet, Dodge or Ford, according to Oscar Guardado, supervisor in the landscape division. The heavy-duty vehicles often pull the company's gooseneck trailers, loaded with materials and equipment.

In fact, truck manufacturers say the most popular pickups for landscapers are the larger ¾-ton pickups including the Dodge Ram 2500, Chevrolet C/K 2500 and Ford F-250. A ¾-ton pickup typically can carry payloads over 3,000 pounds.

The largest pickups, including the Chevrolet C/K 3500, Dodge Ram 3500 and Ford Super-Duty pickups are best for landscapers who typically carry topsoil, stone or other heavy loads. Payloads of more than 5,000 pounds are available.

Full-sized pickups

Here is what is new for 1997 in the full-sized pickup

LANDSCAPE VEHICLES

a must-have for efficiency

Green industry professionals have a great variety of trucks and utility vehicles available to them for 1997.

Attachments and extras, too.

by ARTHUR FLAX

at A.J.'s Landscaping and Design, Inc., a "high-end residential landscaper" in Houston, says the company owns three pickups and three dual-wheel flatbeds, all Chevrolets. All but one are one-ton models, the heaviest you can buy. And what do they haul?

Rocks and soil and trailers too, up to a 12,000 pound unit,

1997 FORD F-150 SUPERCAB



1997 ISUZU HOMBRE SPACECAB



Incentives available

Truck manufacturers are continuing their efforts to help dealers target small business customers.

Chevrolet is most aggressive in marketing vehicles to small commercial businesses. It has established special "Commercial Specialty Vehicle - CSV" dealers who must carry a certain level of truck inventory suited for commercial customers. These dealers are also familiar with the business needs of landscape managers and other commercial enterprises.

Chevrolet also offers free or low cost "Commercial Customer Choice" bin and shelf upfit packages for its vans and trucks. These packages are available at all Chevy dealers, but all dealers may not be aware that they are available. Landscape managers considering a Chevrolet should make it a point to ask about this program.

Dodge offers a rebate program available to landscape managers (who identify themselves as small business owners). Dodge currently offers a \$300 rebate on pickups, \$500 on van and \$600 on gas powered chassis cabs. Call 1-800-WORK-RAM for more information.

Ford does not have any rebates directed at small business, but often offers regional, as well as national rebate programs.

Japanese manufacturers traditionally offer incentives to their dealers rather than directly to the consumer. Landscapers who know about these incentives can use that knowledge as a bargaining chip. Trade publications, such as *Automotive News*, available at larger newsstands, regularly publish retail and dealer incentives. Landscape managers should also ask dealers if they are receiving any rebates.

PRICES

Here are some manufacturers' suggested retail prices on base models for comparison (destination charges not included): Chevrolet C2500, \$17,419; Dodge Ram 2500, \$18,770 and Ford F-250, \$16,355.

truck lines offered by Chevrolet, Dodge and Ford:

Chevrolet full-sized C/K (C models are two-wheel-drive, K's are four-wheel-drive) pickups feature improved power steering and more efficient automatic transmissions. The five speed manual transmission available

on the heavy-duty C/K2500 and 3500 models has also been improved to reduce noise and improve shifting feel.

Base engine is a 200 hp Vortec V-6 and the largest available gasoline engine is a Vortec 7400 (7.4 liters) V-8, producing a maximum of 290 horsepower (hp) and 410 pound-feet of torque. A 6.5 liter, L65 turbo-diesel producing 190 hp and 385 pound-feet of torque is also available on heavier duty models of at least 8,600 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) capacity.

An optional passenger side "third door" is available for improved access on extended cab versions.

Dodge full-sized Ram trucks are little changed for 1997, save for appearance up-

dates. Power ranges from a 175 hp, 3.9 liter V-6 to a massive, 300 hp, 8.0 liter, V-10. A 215 hp, turbocharged, inline six cylinder Cummins turbodiesel is also available.

In the Ford F-Series full-sized pickup line, the all-new body style introduced in January 1996 on the (1997 model) F-150s, is now shared by the F-250 in GVW ratings under 8,500 pounds. The new models offer better ride, handling, comfort and fuel economy.

F-150 and F-250 SuperCabs also feature a standard third door to the cargo/rear passenger area, handy for tool boxes.

Major changes are also taking place under the hood of Ford trucks. Time was when the only vehicles carrying engines with overhead cams and eight or more cylinders had names like Ferrari, Maserati and Lamborghini.

Now, you can find a single overhead cam (SOHC) "Triton" V-8 snarling under the hood of a Ford pickup truck. Overhead engines are known for their smooth power delivery and high performance, but typically produce power at higher engines speeds than conventional pushrod engines.

CUSHMAN TURF TRUCKSTER



However, the Ford engines are said to offer "low end grunt," as well as smooth performance.

A 210 hp, pushrod V-6 is standard in the F-150. Standard engine in the new F-250 is a 220 hp, 4.6 liter Triton V-8. The F-150 and F-250 also offer an optional, 235 hp Triton 5.4-liter SOHC V-8 engine.

An upgraded 7.3-liter direct injection turbo-diesel is offered in Ford's larger pickups.

Compact pickups

Compact pickups are often used by landscapers to tow equipment and many offer towing capacities of up to 3,500 pounds.

Dodge Dakota and Toyota T100 intermediate sized pickups are suited for landscapers who need a larger pickup bed (eight foot length) for equipment and can also be used for towing or light snow plowing.

Interestingly, all compact pickups, except the Toyota T100, are assembled in the United States.

Chevrolet S-Series compact pickups feature tougher frame components and a more efficient automatic transmission. Driver's side airbags and four-wheel antilock brakes are standard.

Dodge: Dodge took the bold styling that made its full-size trucks a big player and applied it to the all-new 1997 Dakota mid-sized pickup. The new Dakota lineup offers significantly more standard features than the trucks they replace.

Regular Cab models now

include as standard, driver- and passenger-side air bags, four-speaker AM/FM cassette stereo, larger tires, rear solar glass and cargo tie-down hooks. The Club Cab models now include all those features plus a 40/20/40 seat with center armrest storage system, driver's seat lumbar adjustment and premium cloth upholstery.

Mazda: the Mazda B-Series and Ford Ranger are built in the same Edison, NJ, plant. They share many features.

Three models are the B2300, with a 112 hp, 2.3 liter four cylinder engine, the B3000, with a 145 hp, 3.0 liter V-6 and the B4000 with a 160 hp, 4.0 liter V-6. The B-4000 can tow a trailer weighing up to 5,900 pounds. However, the four-wheel-drive version of the B2300 is no longer available.

Nissan: Nissan's 1997 pickup truck lineup features driver's side airbag, standard antilock rear brakes and high levels of standard equipment including a double wall cargo



1997 DODGE DAKOTA 4X2



1997 CHEVROLET S-SERIES

bed, front stabilizer bar, tinted glass and side window defoggers. All models are powered with a 2.4 liter, 134 hp, SOHC four-cylinder engine.

Toyota: the Tacoma pickup, introduced in March 1995, gets a facelift with new headlights, grille and nose in two-wheel-drive versions.

The Tacoma features three engines—a four-cylinder 42 hp four-cylinder to a 190 hp V-6. The T100 mid-size pickup features a 150 hp four and the 190 hp V-6. All engines have double overhead cams and four-valves per cylinder.

Isuzu: offers the Hombre, featuring a 2.2 liter, 118 hp,



1997 DODGE RAM 1500 4X4

four-cylinder engine and five speed transmission.

Utility vehicles

There are many brands and types of utility vehicles available, but just as important as picking a certain vehicle is finding a dealer who will stand behind the product and provide fast, competent repairs. Even the best built utility vehicles are likely to need occasional repairs when used in rugged landscaping duty.

Guardado of American Design says his company uses John Deere vehicles, with attachments. He says there is a local dealer who responds readily when repairs are needed, and because the firm is most familiar with the line.

Landscapers who work on golf courses or mostly in residential areas might want to consider an electric utility vehicle, because of its quiet operation. Renting a utility vehicle may be a good way for landscapers to familiarize themselves with equipment and local dealers. Raymond of A.J.'s notes that his firm rents utility vehicles when needed, but might soon buy.

Some available models

E-Z-GO offers a 1,200-pound-capacity utility vehicle, powered by a 350 cc, twin-cylinder overhead cam, 11 horsepower engine with automatic continuously variable transmission. An electric version will soon be available.

Club Car, Inc. offers eight models of its Carryall utility vehicle. Notably, the Carryall VI features a standard flatbed that is almost six



JOHN DEERE 'GATOR'

feet long. Nine and 11 hp gas, and 10 hp electric motors are available. The vehicles offer up to 1,500 pounds capacity.

The John Deere 1800 is a workhorse of a utility vehicle, available with a 1,500 pound capacity cargo box or a 200 gallon "Accumaster" spraying system. Cargo box has hydraulic dump feature. It's powered by an 18 hp gas engine.

Columbia Par Car Corp. offers the Par Car with an 8.8 hp electric motor and 1,100 pound capacity.

Cushman offers a full line of turf care vehicles, including the Turf-Truckster and Jr. Turf-Truckster with engines up to 27 hp and payload to 2,600

pounds. Three- and four-wheel versions are available.

Kawasaki offers its Mule vehicle for a variety of green industry work. The Mule 550 has an optional trailer hitch to tow up to 900 pounds. The Mule 2500 has plastic body panels to resist dents and scuffing. The 2510 has 4WD with selectable Hi/Low range for traction.

Yamaha utility vehicles are suited for golf course operation with gas and electric power. **LM**

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READING'S AEROTECH™



1997 TOYOTA TACOMA

