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A clean SWEEP

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.

Amazon'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 cart 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 Baracuda 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.

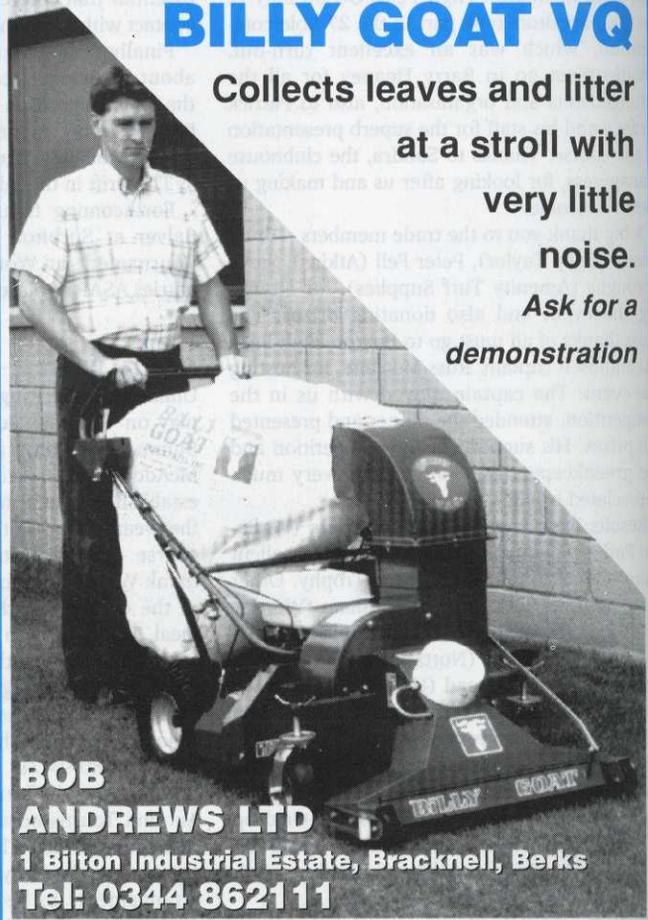
A compact tractor version of the long-established Sisis Litamisa, known appropriately as the Litamina, gives greenkeepers the ability to sweep and collect much nearer to putting areas than before, due to its narrower working width and 50% lower weight.

The ultimate clean-up machine!

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MICHAEL BIRD looks at
some of the latest
design ideas and
innovations available to
the turf professional

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 hopper 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 relying on the draught created by the blades to move grass, leaves and litter from the deck into the collector. However, their efficiency is impaired significantly 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, Toro, Jacobsen, Ford, John Deere, Gravely 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 6hp electric-start diesel engine direct driving 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 18ft³ (0.8m³) aluminium container 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 these units greater versatility and wider appeal to the turf maintenance industry.

Available with capacities of 5.1 and 12.4yd³ (3 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. Features include flotation tyres, strong lightweight construction and a low power requirement, minimising tractor size and weight and possible surface damage. Both models have floating suction heads to follow contours accurately, important if maximum 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 clippings, leaves, paper, cans and hollow corings. Options include a suction hose attachment, enabling the operator 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 Turfmech Machinery. Available in 4.5 and 8yd³ (3.4 and 6.1m³) capacities, the two machines have moving



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4

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, Turfmech says 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 Turfmech prefer a separate operation ahead of the vacuum collector, this being faster and cleaner, they say, eliminating any risk of reseeding detached 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 vacuum sweeper range from MJT Contracts. On the 11m³ Clean Sweep, the company offers a three section scarifier 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 revisions in production methods and cost-

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

2 Holding up to 8cu yd of material, the Tuff Vac 8000 has a two section suction head, moving floor unloading and dual wheels on independent 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

A clean SWEEP

ings by Ariens, the new owners of Pro-mark machines. The unit, which was developed initially to collect de-tached 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 3.8m³ 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 have pto 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 is available for use on hard surfaces.

A powered 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 pickup and 8.7ft³ (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.



An engine-driven fan on Promark's 1050 Vacuum provides suction at a 1.5m pick-up head or through a 3m wander hose



Ground clearance and brush pressure are controlled hydraulically on the Ransomes 2000 trailed sweeper. A scarifying reel is optional

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