

The mechanisation revolution of the past 20 years has had a dramatic effect on the daily work routines of today's golf greenkeepers and their staff.

As staff numbers on the majority of courses have declined, equipment complements have gone up, bringing a host of helpful, clever and innovative ideas to ease daily work schedules in the face of more and more rounds of golf.

If the initial purchase price is beyond the reach of the club, deferred payment schemes at attractive rates of interest are available from specialist finance companies, enabling the cost to be spread over several years and paid for out of future income rather than capital reserves or short-term borrowing.

This gives the advantage of immediate use, with the accompanying benefits of improved efficiency and higher standards today, rather than some time in the future when needs, expectations and price may have changed.

Alternatively, many specialist or expensive machines can often be hired for a week or more, giving even the most impecunious clubs the opportunity to use the very latest in golf course maintenance equipment, as and when needed, without high outlay.

Each year, companies from Britain and around the world develop and introduce new products designed to make the turf professionals' task that little bit easier. Some of the products gain immediate approval, while others may take time to become widely known and accepted.

There are those, also, which deserve to do well, but remain undiscovered for one reason or another. Similarly, there are others which should never have seen the light of day in the first place.

Clearing up leaves, litter, scuffed grass and other debris has long been a major consumer of time and labour for those working on large, open expanses of fine turf. One answer is to blow the material into windrows for faster, easier collection by hand, sweeper or vacuum.

Delivering a high speed blast of air at ground level, the Turfmech range of Tornado blowers comes in three versions – two suitable for mounting at the rear of tractors and one at the front of a ride-on mower in place of its out-front rotary deck.

The company's latest model is the TM 300, designed for linkage-mounting on tractors in the 20hp to 30hp class. Powered by the PTO, the blower is supported on two adjustable wheels and has an anti-scalp roller to prevent dam-

Michael Bird takes a positive view

Easy life!



Altrac wheel remover provides effortless removal and refitting of tractor tyres by one person

age to undulating turf. The 100mph air flow can be directed to the left, right or front of the machine.

Anyone who has to change a tyre on larger tractors or a digger/excavator will know that it can be a difficult job on one's own. Add to that the exacting health and safety considerations, and the need for assistance becomes more pressing.

Help is at hand in the form of the Altrac wheel remover, distributed by Burdens Lincolnshire Ltd.

Comprising a wheeled frame with adjustable gripper, the Altrac permits movement of the wheel in every possible plane, enabling it to be removed, moved and replaced without strain or effort.

The unit is ideal for those having to repair punctures, carry out their own service work or inter-

change tyres regularly for different working applications.

Of course, life would be a whole lot easier if punctures could be eliminated in the first place. A proven puncture preventive is OKO, a liquid sealant which is injected through the valve aperture into the tyre before a puncture occurs.

If the tyre is pierced, the escaping air forces the OKO sealant into the hole (max 7mm diameter) to immediately form a strong airtight seal with minimal loss of air.

Water soluble, OKO is easily washed from the tyre to enable a vulcanised repair to be effected, if necessary. The substance will not affect hot or cold cures and is suitable for virtually all pneumatic tyres. It is distributed by BasicRight Ltd and available from machinery dealers nationwide.

Cordless tools have made a great contribution to the ease and speed of carrying out repairs and maintenance to course machinery and equipment.

Claimed to produce up to 25 per cent more power than other cordless drills is the UK designed and manufactured Combi from Elu Power Tools, combining a percussion drill and screwdriver in one compact unit.

Fitted with a keyless 10mm chuck, the current top of the range model is the 235 watt SBA55K, equipped with a 12 volt power pack and 14 torque control speed settings. For ease and economy of maintenance, the drill has replaceable brushes and a fan-cooled motor.

Included in the kit box are a one hour fast recharger, two batteries and a spanner to interchange the chuck and screwdriver bit.

An alternative to the use of electricity, whether cordless or through a lead, is air. Both portable and fixed compressors are finding increasing favour in many workshops as a safe, convenient and effective means of powering tools and other equipment.

One of the largest ranges of air hand tools can be found in the Spaldings catalogue. A number of complete kits are available comprising either petrol-powered, single or three phase fixed and portable compressors complete with a host of air tools and accessories designed for every conceivable workshop task.

Items such as impact wrenches, angle grinders, ratchets, socket sets, tyre gauges and grease guns can all be purchased individually, as required.

Need to hold the work secure? The Elu Superjaws portable workbench and vice weighs just 44lb (20kg) and can be set up in less than 30 seconds. It has foot pedal locking of the fully adjustable vice, which is able to exert very light pressure or up to one tonne of force to suit the item being worked on.

The steel jaws have detachable polyurethane facings and can be adjusted to accommodate work up to (35in) 900mm wide.

For anyone who needs to set the height of cut accurately and evenly on a greensmower, the Accu-Gauge from Turf Machinery Ltd enables fast and precise measurement of cutting heights to within one thousandth of an inch.

Comprising a setting bar with depth indicator gauge, the tool is placed across the rollers and the measurement read directly from the gauge. The Accu-Gauge can be used also to check for wear in the bearings and ovality of the rollers.