

Roland Taylor starts planning for autumn, by examining the various blower and sweeper products available

BLOWN AWAY

Have you ever thought that Mother Nature is having a laugh at your expense? You just seem to have got on top of the grass and she turns round and starts dumping thousands of tonnes of leaves all over the place. That time of the year is not too far away, so now is the time to start taking stock of the equipment that is available and preparing your battle plans.

Fallen leaves are unpredictable they often pile up in difficult and virtually inaccessible places and the first good gust of wind sends them all over the place. To clear up this annual event efficiently can be a labour intensive operation. Fortunately, manufacturers have not been slow in addressing the problems and there is now a piece of machinery available, not only to deal with virtually every situation but also make the clearing up task easy, fast and cost effective.

BLOWN AWAY



Leaf clearing machinery incorporates one or more of three basic systems: blowing, sucking or sweeping. These come in a number of configurations.

Blowing & sucking

At the heart of both blowing and sucking is an impeller for creating the blast of air or a vacuum - these two often go together as in the blower/vacs.

Where leaves are being collected, in most cases they will pass through the impeller and in doing so are chopped up. This combination has two advantages. Firstly, it reduces their volume, often significantly, thus reducing the number of times the collector has to be emptied. Secondly, the fibres of the material are broken up and exposed so decomposition is accelerated.

Obviously, organic matter is not

always all that passes through this type of system - stones, sand and other foreign bodies can be picked up so the impeller has to be constructed from a material that withstands a fair amount of abuse. This is a point worth remembering when considering which machine to choose. Other factors that can effect performance are the speed and the way in which the volume of air is expelled.

There are other methods of collection using airflows where the material is picked up and passes directly into a collector - these are generally found in the domestic machines.

Machinery using the impeller system comes in all shapes and sizes. There are the highly portable hand held and backpack models, wheel pushed or self propelled and tractor mounted versions.



Wanderhoses

Most of the pedestrian and tractor machines using the suck and blow principle offer as an optional attachment a wanderhose. This consists of large diameter inlet and outlet flexible tubing of various lengths. They are designed for clearing leaves from areas that are inaccessible to the large units, such as ditches and culverts or areas such as greens where heavier machinery would not be acceptable. A wanderhose can also be used for sucking up piles of leaves that have been windrowed by another machine. The system is used on loaders which are purpose built for collecting leaves and litter into trailers or a vehicle's bucket.

Brush type action

These can be split into two forms; the conventional rotary brush or the flail.

The brush is usually an attachment for a tractor, ride-on mower or ATV and these are available as an out-front unit or rear-mounted.

While they work reasonably well on grassed areas they perform better on hard surfaces.

There are a number of machines available that use the flail and these have an advantage that they can be also used for cutting and scarifying large areas. The flail drum rotates at high speed and this action picks up leaves and other debris and deposits them into a container. On the large units an impeller is incorporated to provide an extra vacuum for lifting the material into large hoppers. These have a moving floor to speedily unload. A wanderhose attachment is also available for the more inaccessible sites.

This type of unit is ideally suited to large areas. They are a valuable addition to the maintenance fleet, especially on the big tournament courses for clearing up after the general public has left.

Rotary mowers

Any rotary mower pedestrian or ride on that incorporates a collecting system will collect leaves - some machines do this well.

Around the course Greens

These are the number one priority and the equipment has to be as light as possible so the hand held or backpack blowers are the answer. The leaves can be blown into heaps off the green ready for picking up.

With the hand held models there are two things to look out for - plenty of power yet lightweight (power to weight ratio) and the velocity of the airstream.

The nozzles on these units can be directed wherever they are required. Most have the facility for collecting but these usually have a small capacity so are not practical in most course applications.

One of these machines is an ideal addition to the fleet as it can be used for other applications such as clearing leaves and litter from drains guttering.

Some readers may use them for blowing dew off the greens.

A wanderhose can be used but this may be found to be slow. Also one of the pedestrian machines could be suitable but as these have wheels there is the danger of leaving markings.

Tees

The equipment used on the greens is also suitable for tees. Here, the pedestrian machines may be more at home.

Fairways

This is where the tractor mounted units come into their own. The blower models can be used to directing leaves into windrows or piles. With the flails the material is collected immediately.



For years people scratched their heads looking for a speedy, efficient and economical way of collecting leaves and



grass cuttings. Then, in 1966, the engineers at Trilo came up with the perfect solution - an ingenious vacuum sweeper which they called the Trilo Grass

Collector. The idea was a huge success and the company's reputation for expertise and quality soon spread world-



wide. Thirty years on, Trilo is still leading the way with a wide range of machines that will not only vacuum, but also scarify, cut and collect.

Find out how a Trilo can make your greenkeeping job easier and more efficient by calling us direct today.



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MJT Contracts Ltd

Wadebridge Farm, Landwade, Exning,
Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7NE
Tel: (01638) 720123 Fax: (01638) 720128
Email: sales@mjt.co.uk www.mjt.co.uk

**BLOWN
AWAY**



Bunkers

There is the problem of sucking up or blowing sand about and in most cases these are better manually raked.

Other areas

Each course will have specific requirements. If there are large areas of hard surfaces to be kept clear then the type of machines used in pedes-

trian precincts might be the answer. The tractor mounted rotary brush type is also ideal for these areas.

What to choose

Each course will have different requirements and there are plenty of machines on the market. Now is the time to start looking at what is available. Saltex provides an ideal

opportunity to do just that. An alternative could be to hire some machinery but the only problem is when. Leaf fall can happen over night. One hard frost followed by high winds and there are masses to clear up or it could take up to a month before the trees are bare.

Because of this everyone needs to hire at the same time and machinery

might not be available. However if you are thinking of going the hire route it is worth talking to your local hirer now.

Leaves may look good in their autumnal colours, but they present a problem greenkeepers could do without - so a little preparation now could make the task, and life, a lot easier when it eventually happens.



Move Mountains . . . (well almost!)

Here is some of the debris that customers have shifted with their Turfmech Tornado blowers.

Leaves...litter...bottles...cans...
twigs...pine needles...fir cones...snow...dew...
puddles of water... grass clippings...soil...dust...
scarified thatch...rubber prills...small stones...plastic waste...
hedge trimmings...waste paper...

Call us for more information on the Tornado blower range. Don't sweep it, Tornado it. We'll be happy to demonstrate.

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Turfmech Machinery Ltd. New Road Industrial Estate,
Hixon, Staffs ST18 0PJ, UK Tel: 01889 271503 Fax: 01889 271321
e-mail: sales@turfmech.co.uk