

Alternative mowers

Take a look at the range of mowers offered by John Deere, Ransomes Jacobsen and Toro and it is soon clear that, between them, they will offer pretty much every model to suit the mowing demands of most greens, tees, roughs and fairways. But what if you are looking for something different? James de Havilland investigates...



LEFT: By combining flail mowing, collection and zero turn agility, the Amazone Profihopper is well suited to mowing difficult areas. The powered collection system also enables it to cope with litter and leaves, with the claim that the 700 litre hopper can be fed up to 1,000 litres of material.

RIGHT: Zero turn mowers took time to become established in the UK but now they are widely used in both amenity and sports turf sectors. The pictured SCAG Cheetah is a heavy-duty model designed to be operated for extended periods, with enhanced levels of operator comfort.

BELOW: Cricket square and bowling green mowing is the typical application for mowers such as the Lloyds Paladin. But as with Allett and Dennis, these British built mowers are offered in designs that may suit your mowing needs for tees and greens.

Sit down and tot up the number of pedestrian cylinder mower models available and you will soon realise that by the time you take every variation into account there are probably nearly 100 different models to choose from.

Sounds a lot, but few of these are designed to keep golf greens and tees in trim. In addition, much of the variety will be down to detail specifications, such as mowing width, cylinder size and blade numbers. Not to mention various options to include groomers et al.

In other words, once you home in upon key demands your walk-behind mower choices are narrowed. Sheffield-made ATT is one of the newer additions to the walk behind market with its patented

So there is perhaps more choice than you may think among pedestrian cylinder mowers. But what about ride-on 'fine turf' cylinder models? Once you remove John Deere, Ransomes Jacobsen and Toro Hayter from the equation you are left with Shibaura, imported by FGM Claymore, and Baroness, from Kyoeshia UK. At least these two 'brand' offerings are the only ones that spring readily to mind.

What are you looking for?

Where it starts to get more varied is when you look beyond cylinder mowers. Here there is a much more diverse choice to include a wide choice of rotary and even flail mowers. These can include ride-on, pedestrian and tractor mounted variants too. Add sub-categories, such as zero turn, and you soon



The latest generation of walk behind greens mowers from ATT combines leading edge technology with the greenkeeping expertise of its inventor, John Coleman.

INFINiCut comprises the INFINiPower power unit and the SMARTCut grass cutting cassette (above) to create an advanced dedicated greens and tees mower.



cassette cutting system while certain mowers, such as the pedestrian walk-behind models offered by Lloyds, Dennis and Allett, also tend to be associated more with cricket, tennis or bowls than greens and tees. The 'big three' have set a design 'template' for pedestrian greens mowers and because of that have come to represent the default first choice for some. That is not to say the aforementioned British built mowers are unsuitable for mowing greens and tees. Far from it. It is more that they just tend to not be considered. The same could also be applied to other alternatives such as the Baroness LM56 greens mowers. The latter have a loyal following with a growing number of clubs but many courses appear not to have given them a try.

end up with so much choice it is hard to know where to start looking.

As is always the case, choosing the right tool is made easier if you identify your key demands. Take mowing steep banks that cannot be accessed by a ride-on mower. If the area to be cut is relatively small and they are mown to keep growth under control as opposed to be trimmed to a fine finish, you may well use a brushcutter to do the job.

But what about smaller banked areas adjacent to a bunker? A mower like the Allen Hovertrim, now made by Hayter, is a bit like a cross between a 'Flymo' and a brushcutter, with a mowing width of up to 56cm. Handle extensions allow the mower to be operated down a steep bank, allowing the user to stand on level ground.



Another interesting range of mowers is produced by Lastec. The company's out-front Articulator decks come in designs suitable for use with ride on models by companies to include John Deere and Kubota, with rear mount options for tractors too. The company also produce its own ride-on models. A key Articulator feature is the ability of the deck to follow ground contours, as pictured.

These useful mowers may be a better choice than a brushcutter for this type of work.

Need to reduce labour?

Do you have to keep a driving range mown but find it plays second fiddle to main course mowing due to constraints on labour? A mower like the Etesia ETm Robot can be set up and then left to get on with the mowing with very little input. In broad outline, these models just mow away, following no set pattern.

Sensors prevent them bumping into marker posts or other obstacles, including those that may be moved around. A guide wire prevents the mowers straying from a set mowing area, so there is no worry that they will drift off where they are not wanted.

Lateral thinking

Other mowing 'systems' can also be worth a look such as the Amazon Profihopper. Think zero-turn ride-on with flail mower and auger fed 700 litre capacity collector and you get the idea.

This type of unit can be used to mow, scarify, collect or mulch. It is the type of machine that can be a real time saver when you need to deal with leaves, litter or divots. Clubs with large areas of non-golf grass can find tools like these a real time saver too.

You do not need to have a collector with a flail mower either,

STM and others offering a range of pedestrian flail as well as ride on mowers that can tackle considerable overgrowth. These are just the sort of machine to bring out to control boundaries beyond the rough, periodic control being the key demand.

Then there are tractor powered rotary mowers, such as the Trimax Merlin and the Progressive series brought in by The Grass Group. As an alternative to a traditional tractor trailed cylinder gang, these mowers can make an ideal partner to a ride-on fairway mower, coping with longer wet grass and being ideal for out of season maintenance mowing. They should follow contours well too.

Those that 'conservation' mow small areas of a course may want to carry out just one cut in late autumn. A traditional cutterbar mower, such as the once ubiquitous Allen Motor Scythe, can be just the tool for this type of work.

A 'two-wheeled tractor' fitted with this type of mower can tackle really long 'meadow' grass. Suppliers include Tracmaster with its BCS models.

As is always the case, it pays to stop and think back to what your mowing needs include. Although there are seldom really new advances, developments such as the Etesia Robot models show there are alternatives to traditional mowing systems.



Kubota modified the pictured 40hp STV mid-mount rotary mower for a disabled operator. Fitted with a hoist and hand controls, the mower operator can mount and dismount the tractor from a wheelchair without help from a third party.

Etesia now markets its ETm Robot models throughout Europe, the pictured ETm 105 featuring five twin-bladed cutting units. Designed to operate day and night, the mower will work with little attention between annual services. Will cover up to 20,000m², adopting a random mowing pattern to prevent developing wheel tracks.



ABOVE: Traditional tractor trailed gangs still have a place on many golf courses, but for some a rotary alternative is preferred. The pictured Trimax Merlin is designed to produce a high quality finish over wide areas to include fairways.