

Rollers, attachments take their place in maintenance program

Turf rollers are becoming an increasingly important maintenance tool as golfers demand ever-faster greens speeds and cutting heights reach dangerously low levels. Rollers are used prior to mowing and during grow in to increase speeds and avoid scalping. They can be used following greens aeration to more speedily return them to puttable condition. In some cases, they can be used after topdressing to work the sand through the turf.

Many companies offer turf rollers for maintaining greens. Among them are the following firms:

Brouwer Turf Equipment Ltd. — 416-476-4311
CheTech Company — 800-228-8784
Emrex Inc. — 717-288-9360
Farber Bag & Supply Co. — 319-583-6304
Friend Turf Equipment — 800-777-2936

Gandy Company — 800-443-2476
Jacobsen Div. of Textron Inc. — 414-637-6711
Multitynes Ltd. — 416-520-4845
Newlon Bowls, Tru Turf Equipment Division — 805-871-0213
Pacific Equipment & Irrigation Inc. — 909-594-5811
Partac Peat Corp. — 800-247-2326
Precision Small Engine Co. — 305-974-1960
Salsco Inc. — 203-271-1682
SISIS Inc. — 904-733-9715
Smithco Inc. — 215-688-4009
The Toro Co. — 612-888-8801
Turf Care Products Inc. — 800-282-4792
Turflite Inc. — 800-443-8506
Wood Bay Enterprises Inc. — 800-661-4942

Manufacturers positioned for onset of electric models

By PETER BLAIS

The introduction of the electric riding greens mower is the most talked-about technology to hit the greens mower market in the past year.

Ransomes began full-scale production of its E-Plex in late 1994. **Jacobsen**, as it did a year ago, will demonstrate its prototype at the upcoming Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Confer-

ence and Show in San Francisco and begin selling units in early 1996. **John Deere**, **Toro** and **Bunton** are rumored to be working on electric riders.

As with any innovative new product, questions abound. Those concerning electric riders include, "Will the batteries remain charged long enough to mow greens in hilly terrain?" and "How will the units operate in cold weather on Northern courses?"

"As a concept, it's an interesting one. But we'll have to take a look at what's out there and see what they can do before we get too involved," said Clair Peterson, Deere's advertising and promotions manager.

The E-Plex hit the market on a commercial basis in early November, according to Ransomes spokesman Tom Mentcer. While no specific sales figures were yet available, Mentcer said the E-Plex had generated "a lot of excitement" during demonstrations at golf courses and trade shows. Demonstrations-to-sales ratios were running a "very healthy" 3-to-2 (three demonstrations for every two units sold), he added.

"Superintendents already dealing or concerned about having to face noise ordinances were particularly interested," Mentcer said.

Sales are also strong for the Greensplex 160, a more traditional fossil fuel-driven mower introduced a year ago, the Ransomes spokesman said.

Jacobsen will be showing off a slightly revised version of its proposed electric rider in San Francisco, according to company spokesman John Mielke. The initial unit has been beefed up from a 36-volt to a 48-volt system. Other revisions will be worked in before Jacobsen moves into full production in early 1996, Mielke added.

"We don't see any disadvantage to being second into the market," the Jake executive said. "We're hoping to come out with some better features [than Ransomes]. Once our unit is in the field, we hope to be No. 1 before long."

Jacobsen has five models of traditional walking greens mowers and three riders. The walking mowers include the two- and four-cycle PGM models and the 18-, 22- and 26-inch Greens King units. The 18-inch (designed for undulating greens) and 26-inch (designed for collars, aprons and tees) models are relatively new to the marketplace.

"We're going to OPC [Operator Presence Controls] on our walk behinds," said Mielke of the handle-mounted bar that must be engaged before the mower will run.

Continued on page 34

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