

This professional grade chain saw made by Stihl combines most of the features needed by arborists and tree care firms.

Commercial use saws like this John Deere model feature controls that are well grouped for the user.

## How To Select A

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Rutledge, Pennsylvania

**S**UCCESS and profit with a power saw begins at the beginning. That's when you walk into the dealer's store and sally out with the new saw that you have selected to meet your needs. Not only will the RIGHT choice put extra money in your pocket, but you can be super sure that the WRONG one will cost you money, money, money in repair bills labor cost due to down time and even possible customer loss.

The extra time spent to be SURE you chose the right saw for YOUR specific application will be the best guarantee of satisfaction you can get. Really shop around. Too many professionals don't. They often pay dearly later.

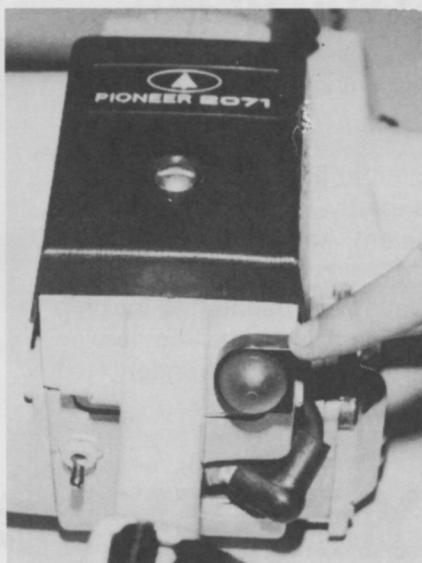
What factors usually influence your ultimate decision in selection of any piece of equipment. Price? How well you know the dealer? A familiar name brand? They are all significant but are they all really the vital considerations that they should be?

Here are what we feel to be very

fundamental considerations for guiding your selection of the right power saw: 1. **Application** (your specific use); 2. **Design and Construction**; 3. **Features** (standard and optional including safety features); 4. **Service**; 5. **Price** (per-dollar value).

Obviously if you are only using a power saw to cut light brush or on occasion heavy usage, you don't need the power or durability required if you are doing heavy tree cutting day in and day out.

The average tree service contractor or landscaper doesn't need a gi-



Primer shown on this Pioneer saw is the "bulb" type. Use it to give you first pull starts.



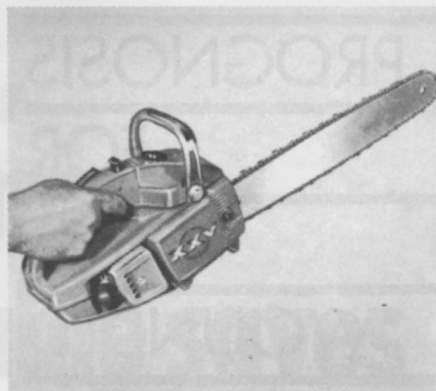
This big Homelite "lightweight" and ones by other manufacturers will meet the heaviest demands of most tree surgeons and landscapers. Author sees little if any need for gigantic "logger" saws.



McCulloch Power Mac 6 is a good example of compact wrap-around styling and well-grouped controls.



Skil saw above comes with a 4.2 cu. inch engine that's big enough to handle a 16 inch bar. Saw is well balanced.



Poulan makes a truly superlight power saw. It should be light enough to use with one hand, if needed.

## Pro — Grade Chain Saw

gantic Great Northwest Loggers (2 man, 6' bar saw for his daily work any more than a carpenter needs a sledge hammer to drive small nails. "The bigger-the better" isn't necessarily true in your business, especially if the saw has to sit around, unused for weeks on end.

Non-use can kill a piece of equipment just as dead as overuse. Bars, chains and sprockets rust when idle. Cylinder walls and pistons corrode. Seals and gaskets dry out and crack. Gas in the carburetor goes stale and forms shellac that gums it up.

So buying a big brute you will hardly ever use probably won't save you a nickle in the long run. In fact, you will be very lucky if Big Bertha even starts on those rare occasions when you *do* need it.

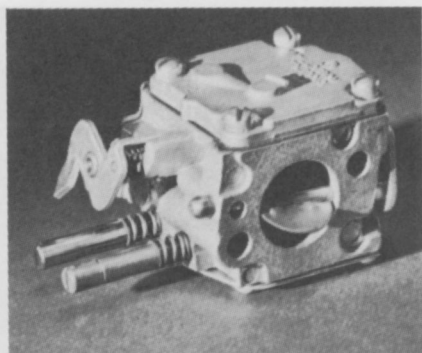
What *are* you supposed to do when you have a big tree or some heavy-duty cutting lined up? First, you could RENT a big one when you really need it. Or, you could subcontract that particular job. Or, as an ace-in-the-hole, you can do most any job with a smaller saw that you can with a bigger one . . . with a little more effort, time and chain oil. (Remember you can slice a 5" grapefruit with a paring knife).

Only *you* can accurately evaluate your realistic need in a saw or saws. But take the time to do just that before you buy. If you really need several different saws by all means get what you need. Most professional tree service contractors need at least one big saw (24 or 30" bar), but it

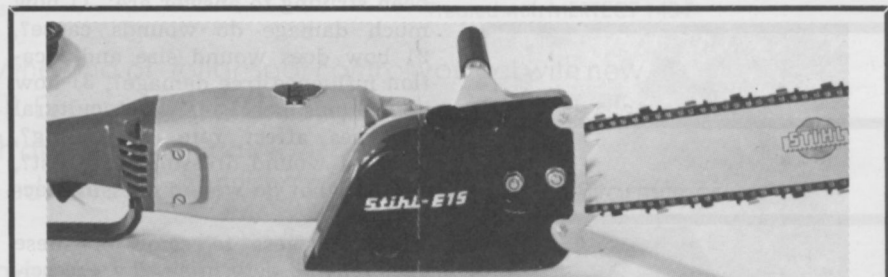
doesn't have to be a heavy weight monster.

On the other hand, *underestimating* your needs can cost you money, too.

A familiar cry among a lot of tree service contractors is "those super" (continued on page 36)



Many saws have a diaphragm type carb — a must for professionals who must cut in all positions. Be sure yours has it.



### What About An Electric Power Saw?

Generally speaking they are used very little, if at all, by most tree surgeons, landscapers and outside maintenance people. But there are some occasions when they are necessary.

For instance, in QUIET ZONES such as around hospitals, etc. Or where no flammable or noxious gasses are permitted. Or when working in dangerous NO-SPARK AREAS. In some rare cases it is actually more convenient and economical to use an electric power saw than gasoline powered. (Such as in a wood yard near electric power outlet.)

If you do have occasion to use an electric power saw, here are

some things you should look for before buying:

**INSULATION** — is it double-insulated? (You could get a hell of a shock working on damp ground or wet brush.)

**HOUSING** — Is the casing impact-proof? Some of the new impact resistant plastics are really great, but if it has a plastic housing make sure it is really good, not just *any* plastic.

**CORD** — See if it is heavy duty quality and well reinforced where it enters the motor housing. This is important because of the severe amount of twisting and turning it will have to endure in commercial use.

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## CHAIN SAW SELECTION (from page 15)

lightweight ones are great but our boys are burning them up!" Know why? They are trying to make one small saw do the work of two (on the ground and in the trees).

First thing they do when they buy a super lightweight saw is take off the 12" bar and put on a 16" one so the saw will "cut bigger stuff". But what's supposed to make the engine bigger? They did it with the older original "lightweights! But they had more beef, more guts. That's why they weighed 18 or 20 lbs. instead of 6 or 8 lbs. Remember?

So while it's good not to hinder yourself with too much equipment, you can also out-cheap yourself by not having enough. The super lightweight should be an *addition* to your power saw strength, not a *replacement* for anything. Keep that in mind and yours will last a long, long time.

Your best guarantee of dependability in a power saw is what's built in before you buy it.

Is the saw you are about to buy built for commercial use? Pick it up and examine it closely. Some saws are just not built for rugged heavy duty use and it shows.

Look the saw over and try to visualize it being pulled up and down through tree branches or being carried thru heavy brush, or being jostled in the back of a truck from job to job year after year? Will it be able to take that kind of abuse?

Look the recoil starter over. Heavy duty cord? Pull it and test the spring return. (They're no small job to change in the field.) Does the unit look and feel like it will take hundreds, perhaps thousands, of starts without failure.

Are the spark plugs and ignition accessible yet safely tucked out of the way so they don't get knocked off by brush or branches?

Does the saw feel well balanced? Are the handles strong and compact with a wrap around configuration or are they somewhat frail looking or just sticking out waiting to be broken off? Examine them carefully. Are they easily replaceable or will you just about have to rebuild the saw?

Are there good handle grips? Oil and gas can make bare handles dangerously slippery.

Are gas and oil fill caps located in convenient places for quick fill up? Is gas fill *safely* located so spilled gasoline does not run right down on a hot muffler? (Speaking of mufflers, you should insist on a spark-arresting type of muffler.)

Is air filter easy to remove or clear or change?

Are controls compactly and sensibly grouped for easy one-hand access? You should be able to operate throttle, oiler, off-on switch, choke (or primer) all with the same hand, with ease.

Even these "small" things can and do make a significant difference for the pro-operator. Every minute of wasted time or down time for your equipment is money out of your pocket. If you *think* now you can avoid grief later.

Every year there are more saws and more new features to make the buyer's choice more exciting (and more complex) than ever. Of course, even the "best" saws will not have all of the best features because they vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. Here then is a run down of some of the features you will most likely be encountering in your search for the right saw:

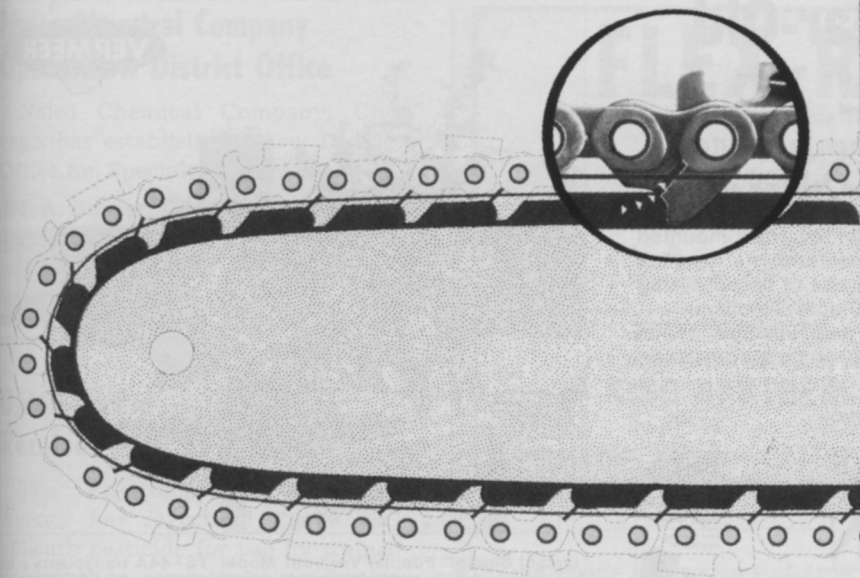
**AUTOMATIC OILING** — means you don't have to pump oil manually. A good feature if you have manual oiling too. Most pro-jobs require lots of oiling for bar and chain. One bad thing about automatic oiling — you can run out of oil without realizing it.

**ANTI-VIBRATION** (or vibration isolated) handles, etc. Hour after hour of chain saw use can numb the strongest of hands and tire out arm muscles. This feature is worth shopping around to find for the commercial user. Stihl saws are tops in this department.

**COMPRESSION RELEASE** — releases the compression in cylinders for easier (prevents saw from jerking around) starts. Certainly a convenience but no real big deal. (See photo on page 383)

**SOLID STATE IGNITION** — advanced type of ignition system which eliminates the need for break points and condenser. Lasts indefinitely but add expense to the saw and has not received as good a response as the manufacturers had hoped for.

**PRIMER OR CHOKE** — which is the best? There is honestly no general agreement amongst power saw users. A primer can give you first pull starts which you usually won't get with a choke. However, a choke is more versatile (you can give it half choke, quarter choke, etc.) and it is dependable. At least one major manufacturer now using primers is switching back to chokes in 1973. That should tell us something.



Here's a clever device. Oilamatic chain by Stihl "recycles" chain oil in bar grooves and carries it to rivets and sprocket.

**SPIKE BARS** give you improved leverage when cutting. Nice item but reduces effective bar length 1-2" not *really* necessary on direct drive saws.

**SPARK ARRESTING MUFFLER** — Prevents "live" sparks from getting out of the exhaust. You need one,

period! They are very important if you work around dry brush, and who in this business doesn't. Some manufacturers don't seem to agree about just how important they are but most make them available — even if it's at added cost, which it should not be. They are required

in all National and State forests and should be required on your jobs.

**CHAINS** — There are several new concepts in chains on the market worth looking for. Some chains have chrome plated cutters which definitely increase chain life. Stihl makes an "oil scooper" chain (Oilamatic) which picks up and reuses oil that has run down into the bar groove. Clever idea! Pioneer saws are now using the Sure-Guard chain that prevents dangerous saw kick-back when chain hits knots in wood, etc. A long needed and very welcome safeguard for saw users!

**ROLLER BARS** — The roller bar has been around for a while now and although it does reduce friction its not all that great according to many users I've queried. Its value is questionable on the high speed direct drive saws. Even on slower gear driven jobs, the roller end is easily bent, the bearings wear out and can get gunked up with dirt, etc. Not a feature worth paying more for, especially since most bar tips are hardened steel anyway.

**AUTOMATIC CHAIN SHARPEN-**

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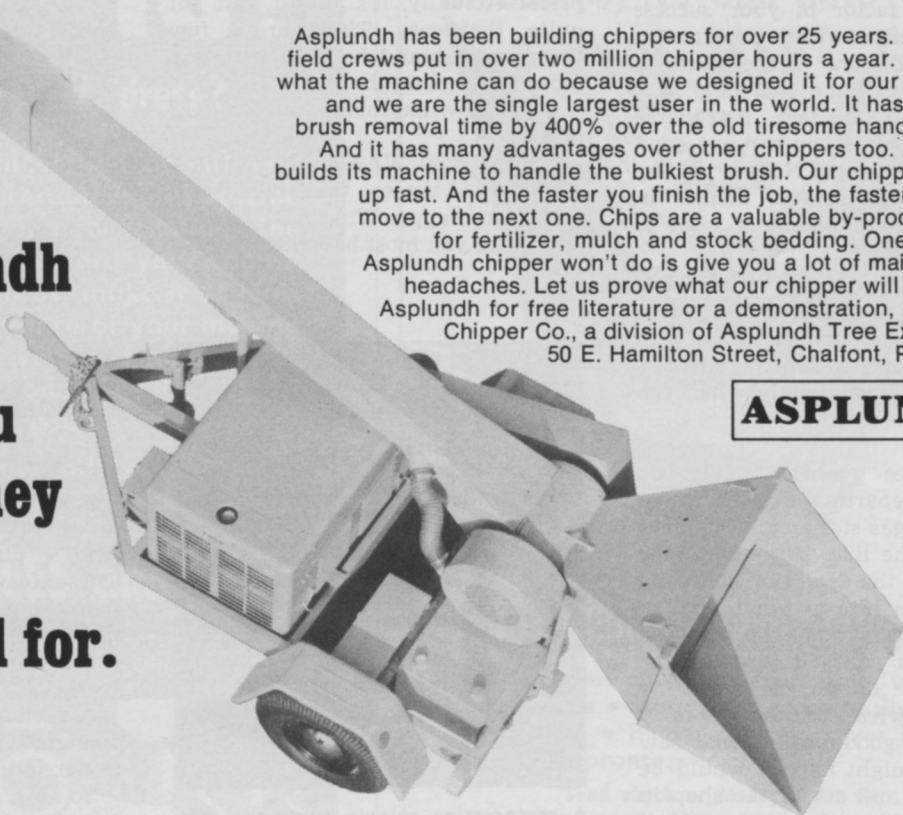
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## CHAIN SAW SELECTION (from page 37)

**ERS** — in a word, forget it. They are a gimmick made for, and sold to, amateurs. They require a special chain (which, by the way, doesn't cut very well, even when sharp) and a built in sharpening stone, etc. They have no place in the field with pros.

**SERVICE** — The *place* you buy your new saw may be the most determining factor in your success or dissatisfaction with a power saw. The best made saw in the world is no better than some real dog, if it needs repair. (In fact, it's *worse* than a real dog if you can get good service on the dog.) **No saw is any better than the service behind it.**

Service on equipment is vital to the commercial operator.

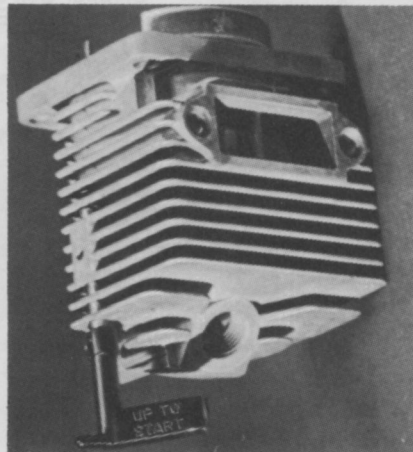
The place to buy a professional power saw is at a professional power saw dealer who has facilities, personnel and parts to repair your saw expertly and immediately when (no "ifs" about it, it will need service) it needs it.

In most cases "qualified" dealers *do not* include department stores, hardware stores, gas stations, mail-order houses and the like. No matter how well you like the dealer or how long you've known him or what kind of "discount" he's giving, the question you must ask yourself foremost, is: "What can he do for me when my saw needs service". (Authors note: A definition of good professional saw service you might expect, would be generally: in and out of the shop in one full working day except if it needs special parts (such as the frame, etc. in which case you should

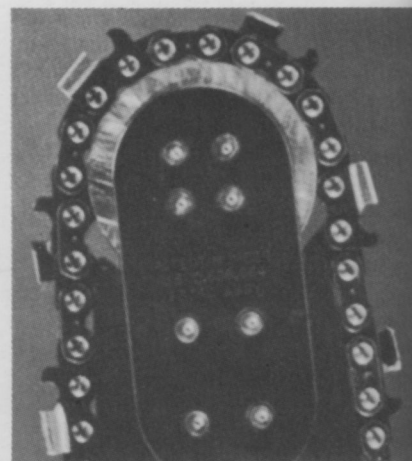
be able to borrow or reasonably rent a saw till yours is fixed.)

Once you have decided in your mind exactly what you **NEED** in a power saw and what features you want the most, and know off-hand, or have checked the yellow pages for, several qualified dealers, the matter of price becomes rather simple. Who has got what you want at the best price? Actually, it's almost, but not quite, that easy. There are a few things you should be willing to pay more for. Among them are:

1. The saw that meets your **EXACT** needs.
2. What you **WANT**. (If your kid wants a red wagon, that's what will make him happy. What **YOU WANT** will make you most happy.)



A compression release takes the compression out of the engine during starting, thus making the starter rope much easier to pull.



A roller nose bar tip has been introduced on many saws. It helps reduce drag and friction. However, value is questionable, especially on high-speed direct drive saws.

3. Convenience — A qualified dealer right around the corner is worth sacrificing a few bucks initial cost to have.

4. A dealer known for good service.

5. Safety features; such as spark arresters, Sure-Guard Chain and Stihl's auto-throttle lock. (Note: These features do not always cost more but they are *worth* extra money if they do.) You can't put a price on your safety or that of your workers.

6. A longer or more comprehensive guarantee. It usually indicates a better built saw.

So now, armed with some good information on how to choose it, you're ready to go get the deal of your life on a power saw. Happy hunting!