

So you need a piece of equipment . . . a truck, a sprayer, a chipper, etc. You've checked into the price of new equipment and it's enough to frighten you. But buying a piece of equipment used is a gamble — a calculated risk. Decisions, decisions!

But WAIT! Don't lose your cool! There's an easy way out . . . at least out of the murky depths of indecision.

Here's how you can manage to make the right decision consistently and also save money for yourself in the process:

First, you must objectively and accurately evaluate your specific needs and determine exactly what it is that you need for your operations — nothing more, but certainly nothing less.

Second, you must determine how it is you are going to get the best deal or fill your specific needs with the amount of money you have to spend. The big-time operators often have their accountants make these evaluations for them but, nonetheless, big or small-time, the application and cost evaluation should be made.

EVALUATING YOUR NEEDS

Sit down with a piece of paper and pencil and write down your needs (not *wants, needs*) the physical specifications your machine must have.

If it's a chain saw and you must have a 24" bar put down "must have 24" bar." Or if it is a chipper and it *must* have a safety cut-off switch, write that down.

Write every specification down that you can think of so that later you can check them off against any piece of equipment you are considering to see if it meets all your specifications.

You should also include your financial limits as part of your specs. If you can pay whatever is necessary, write down "money limitation — none." If you can only justify an expense of \$2,500 — put down "money limita-



ARBORIST SHOP TALK

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That New Equipment Decision

tion — \$2,500," etc.

It is important to be brutally realistic about your needs. It can be revealing.

For instance . . . you're going to buy a chipper. Your buddy who is a contractor just got a big new V-8 16 inch job . . . a beauty. That's what you want, too. But that V-8 16" job costs, let's say \$1000 more than a 12" one with a 4 or 6 cylinder engine.

Now let's say you sell firewood too, so that nearly everything more than 3 or 4 inches in diameter you are keeping for firewood not grinding it. Do you then really need a V-8 16" chipper? You might be just wasting \$1000!

So know exactly what you need before looking to buy and shop to buy what will fill your needs. Nothing more, nothing less.

NEW OR USED

Next step is to decide whether you will buy a new piece or a used piece. "Used!" you say. "I wouldn't have a piece of used equipment." Nothing but "somebody else's headaches" right?

Well, ask yourself this. Isn't every piece of equipment you're operating right now "USED"?

There are certain advantages to buying used equipment besides the obvious fact that it is usually cheaper initially. One other advantage is that of availability. You may be able to get a used piece of equipment when you need it; easier than waiting for delivery on a new piece.

Also, you may be able to get certain extra cost fea-

tures on a used piece that, if you added them onto a new piece might put the cost out of your reach.

Thirdly, there may be a distinct tax advantage to buying a used piece and fixing it up (that's all "expense" rather than equity) over buying a new piece which will have a higher "asset" value.

Of course there is always the possibility that you may buy a real bummer, too. However, if you really take the pains to look over and test run a piece of equipment to the best of your ability, that probably won't happen.

Most people buy too hastily. Take your time. Ask specific questions. Check it out thoroughly. Don't overlook the obvious.

ADVANTAGES

New equipment has clear advantages if you rule out the major consideration of money. New equipment is always modern. You can find the latest features and you have a selection of whatever feature or option you want.

It's more prestigious . . . a better image . . . to have new equipment. (Although newly painted used equipment looks almost as good.)

You will no doubt have a guarantee. And faster, more easily available repair service should it be needed.

Buying new equipment simplifies the work of the buyer. Just find the dealers whose equipment meets your needs and decide then on the basis of competitive prices, guarantees, convenience of location, reputation for service, etc.

One standard hazard of

buying new equipment is that the dealer usually "sells" the buyer, rather than the buyer "buying" what he wants. Try to be sure of what you do want and don't let an over-zealous salesman "switch" you to more saw, sprayer, chipper, or truck than you actually need or can afford.

When you buy or are about to buy a piece of equipment, you may be faced with the problem of disposing a piece of equipment which you will no longer need. A "trade in" to a dealer may not be to your advantage.

SELL USED EQUIPMENT

So sell your own used equipment. How? Try a classified ad in a local paper under "Machinery and Tools" heading. Or put a card or little sign up where your crowd will see it (the chain saw shop, arborist supply house, chipper or sprayer dealer, etc.).

For large equipment, a classified ad in the trade magazines such as WEEDS, TREES AND TURF is a good bet. You might also phone around to some of your friends and competitors who might be interested.

Should you fix it up before selling? Yes. Go over it thoroughly, clean it, paint it up, and lubricate it well. It will look and run better and sell faster. Gather together any extra parts and manuals that go with it. They are extras that will help. Know exactly what is wrong with it and be honest.

Don't try to "doctor" anything to conceal something that is wrong. Either fix it or be frank about it so that your buyer can fix it himself. You don't have to tell anybody it is a worn out piece of junk (let them evaluate it themselves and make their own judgment) but don't lie either.

What may no longer meet one person's needs may still be adequate to meet those of someone else. Ask a fair price and you'll probably have no problem selling your hand-me-down equipment.