



The increasing customer base for utility tractors means more attachments will be available in the coming years.

COMPACT TRACTORS HELP REDUCE COSTS

The versatility and flexibility of compact tractors make them ideal for budget-minded landscape managers.

by Ken Moehle

Increasing numbers of landscaping and maintenance operations are finding compact utility tractors in the 18 to 35 horsepower range valuable additions to their mix of equipment. One key reason is the ability of compact tractors to provide added versatility and flexibility.

Like mid-sized utility tractors, compact tractors can operate an ever-increasing list of attachments that mechanize hundreds of grounds care tasks.

Landscape managers often purchase compact tractors because the versatile machines fit tight quarters and give more workers a productive, multi-

purpose machine. However, once the tractors are in service, grounds care supervisors discover that compact tractors can simplify equipment management, control operating cost and reduce lifetime ownership costs.

Operation and maintenance

When compared to selecting single-purpose machines and maintaining an equipment fleet with diverse sizes and types of engines, compact tractors can help simplify servicing, repairs and managing supplies by:

- reducing the need to lease or buy and maintain a large inventory of single-purpose, self-powered machines;
- reducing the numbers of engine types and sizes to fuel, lubricate, service and maintain;

- improving the fuel efficiency of modern diesel engines in compact tractors, which compare favorably with the efficiency of smaller engines in single-purpose equipment;

- servicing skills, experience and tools are virtually identical to those for servicing mid-sized tractors, loader/backhoes, skid-steer loaders and similar diesel-powered equipment;

- the fact that many compact tractors are supported by large dealer networks servicing and selling other utility, construction and agricultural equipment;

- the likelihood that fuels, oils and hydraulic/transmission fluids are the same as those required by mid-sized tractors, loader/backhoes and other

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An example of vehicle flexibility is Kubota Tractor Corporation's R400, which is suitable for both commercial and industrial use.

equipment commonly found in grounds-care fleets;

- the engineering of engine, hydraulics, hitch and PTO, which are built to accommodate a wide range of demanding applications. Therefore, these components have longer life than similar components on many single-purpose machines, and

- longer service life, which reduces total operating costs of compact tractor systems which compare favorably with costs of single-purpose machines.

Resale and trade-in value

Not only is the cost of a compact tractor system amortized over a greater

period due to its longer service life, but at the end of its service life, the compact tractor is typically worth far more than the single-purpose machines it replaces. It is not uncommon for small tractors that are decades old and properly maintained to sell for more than their original purchase price.

The many markets for compact tractors, including agriculture, industry, homeowners and contractors, make them valuable items in all regions. When the high resale value of the compact tractor is taken into account, the lifetime cost of choosing the compact tractor system for landscape management work becomes extremely competitive with the lifetime costs of single-purpose mowers, snow removal machines and other equipment choices.

Compact tractors are now a well-established part of the equipment marketplace. The large customer base means the choice of attachments to purchase or rent will continue to increase and future parts and service availability is assured. These conditions allow the landscape manager to be confident that purchasing or leasing compact tractors is economical as well as productive and efficient. **LM**

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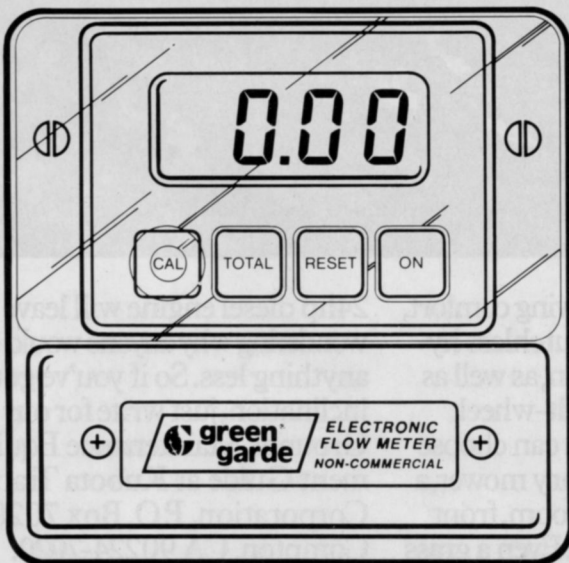
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