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Troy-Bilt GTX with single-pedal hydrostatic drive, power steering



Snapper's fender-mounted control lever is operator friendly



New Holland's 25 and 30 Series "Boomer" tractors offer big-tractor features in 25 to 34-horsepower units.

# COMPACT TRACTORS

Compact tractors have come a long way in a few short years. They're reliable and versatile, with many safety and comfort features.

The compact tractor is one of the green industry's most versatile and valuable tools. Or should we say many tools because the tractor, depending on the implements used, can accomplish so many different tasks. Tractor manufacturers offer many attachments, but there are plenty of aftermarket work savers too.

The following list of compact tractors and related implements is not all-inclusive but it should give you, the green industry professional a good starting point in meeting some of your more demanding landscape and turf tasks.

The Classen VB-40 vibratory plow attaches to most 3-pt. tractors of 18-hp or larger. It buries poly or pvc irrigation pipe up to 1 1/2 inches in diameter, electrical wire or cable 12 inches below ground.

**GARDEN WAY**  
(800) 833-6990  
Circle No. 293

Garden Way Inc. says its Troy-Bilt 20-hp GTX Tractor is a multi-purpose workhorse. It features a Kohler Command engine. The tractor's front, mid and rear PTO points are shaft driven. Single-pedal hydrostatic drive, coupled with power steering makes the GTX Tractor easy to maneuver, and the rear axle offers dual speeds.

**GLENMAC**  
(800) 437-9779  
Circle No. 294

Glenmac offers an assortment of Harley tractor-mounted landscape tools including a Power Box Rake, Pro Power Rakes, scarifiers, and its new Roller Packer Wheel all Pro-6 & 8 and T-6 and 8 rakes. The Roller Packer Wheel is self pivoting so that when you change angles it swings so you don't drive over your windrow. Adjustable down pressure to change the depth of the roller.

**GRAVELY**  
(518) 391-7268  
Circle No. 295

Gravely's Professional-G's riding tractors are manufactured with welded-steel and cast iron structures and have no belts to slip or break. They feature rack-and-pinion steering; all-gear, direct-drive transmissions; and their engines are in the rear for better traction and stability.

## COMPACT TRACTORS

**AGRI-FAB**  
(217) 728-8388  
Circle No. 291

The Agri-Fab Tractor Mounted Spreader allows material (de-icing materials, fertilizer, grass seed, etc.) to be spread in a uniform 4-foot pattern. It has a capacity of about 100 lbs. with a spread width of 25,000 sq. ft. The hopper is made of poly. The spreader is powered with a 12-volt motor.

**CLASSEN**  
(402)371-2294  
Circle No. 292

Available with a wide variety of custom-engineered attachments.

**INGERSOLL**  
**(414) 582-5000**  
**Circle No. 296**

Ingersoll Equipment Co., Inc., offers the 3000 and 4000 series of hydraulic-drive garden tractors with 14-hp to 20-hp engine options. Two models are offered with power steering and all are standard with hydraulic lift. They gain versatility with hydraulically driven attach-

ments, water-cooled diesel engines, the LB 1914 with an engine hp of 20.5 offers a lift capacity of 1460 lbs., the LB 2554 at 26 hp a lift capacity of 2100 lbs., and the LB 3054 with 30.5 hp. a lift capacity of 2150 lbs. Optional equipment: front weights, front end loaders, mowers, snowblowers, backhoes, depending on the model.

**KROMER**  
**(612) 472-4167**

**Circle No. 299**

The Kromer AFM is a tractor particularly well suited for sports turf. With attachments it can level dirt for sodding; condition infield ball diamonds; paint lines on football, soccer and track fields; spray chemicals

transmission is available on B-Series. Kubota also offers its Grand L Series of tractors from 25 to 37 hp equipped with hydrostatic steering, shuttle transmission and shift-on-the-go. Loaders, backhoes, box scrapers and tillers are among the implements that enhance the Grand L's versatility.



**NEW HOLLAND**  
**(717) 355-1371**  
**Circle No. 311**

New Holland's new 25 and 30 Series "Boomer" compact tractors offer big-tractor features in 25 to 34 engine hp units. Large displacement 3-cylinder New Holland diesels provide long engine life with lower noise levels and more fuel efficiency. 9X3 or hydraulic transmission with speed control, line hydraulics and 540 rpm

**Kioto offers 3 four-wheel drive compacts**

ing deck which is convertible to mulching.

With hydrostatic drive, the fender-mounted hydro control lever combines fingertip speed selection with integrated cruise control.

PTO. Exclusive SuperSteer FWD front axle option reduced turnaround diameter up to 50 percent without brakes. Standard on 30 series—telescoping, tilt steering wheel.

**SNAPPER**  
**(770) 957-9141**  
**Circle No. 312**

Snapper's Lawn

**STEINER**  
**(216) 828-0200**  
**Circle No. 313**

The Steiner 525 is the most powerful of five Steiner tractor models. The 525, with constant 4-wheel drive, is powered with a 23-hp Kubota diesel, and features a hydrostatic transmission, hydraulic power steering and Peerless 2500 dual-speed transaxles. It's unique articulated frame allows it to climb smoothly up grades and across undulating terrains, bending and twisting as it goes.

**TIGRONE**  
**(970) 668-5924**  
**Circle No. 314**

The Tigrone 4X4 has two fronts. A double set of pedals and inversion of the steering wheel and seat (which can all be done in less than a minute without tools) enables this tractor to work in either of two directions. All-wheel drive on four large tires. One of several unique tractors from Antonio Carraro, imported from Italy. Attachments allow mowing, snow plowing, and other landscape duties. **LM**



**Attachments give Ingersoll tractors versatility**

ments. Tillers, chipper-shredders, snowblowers, brushcutters, vacuums, log splitters, rear PTOs and mowers with mulching kits are available for all models.

**JOHN DEERE**  
**(919) 850-0123**  
**Circle No. 297**

The name John Deere is synonymous with tractors. Deere offers three 20 to 33-hp hydrostatic-drive models (755, 855 and 955) and three 28 to 33-hp gear-drive models (870, 970 and 1070). All feature liquid-cooled diesel engines, live independent mid- and rear PTOs, and all can be equipped with front-, mid- and rear-mounted implements simultaneously. Engage on-the-go MFWD is available on all these models.



**Kromer AFM particularly handy for ball fields**

for weed and insect control; and also remove the dangerous ridge of infield material on the edge of the outfield grass.

**KUBOTA**  
**(310) 444-7000**  
**Circle No. 310**

Ranging from 13 to 18 PTO hp, Kubota Tractor Corp.'s new B-Series compact tractors are well suited to a variety of landscaping and turf applications. The B-Series models feature 3-cylinder diesel engines. Hydrostatic

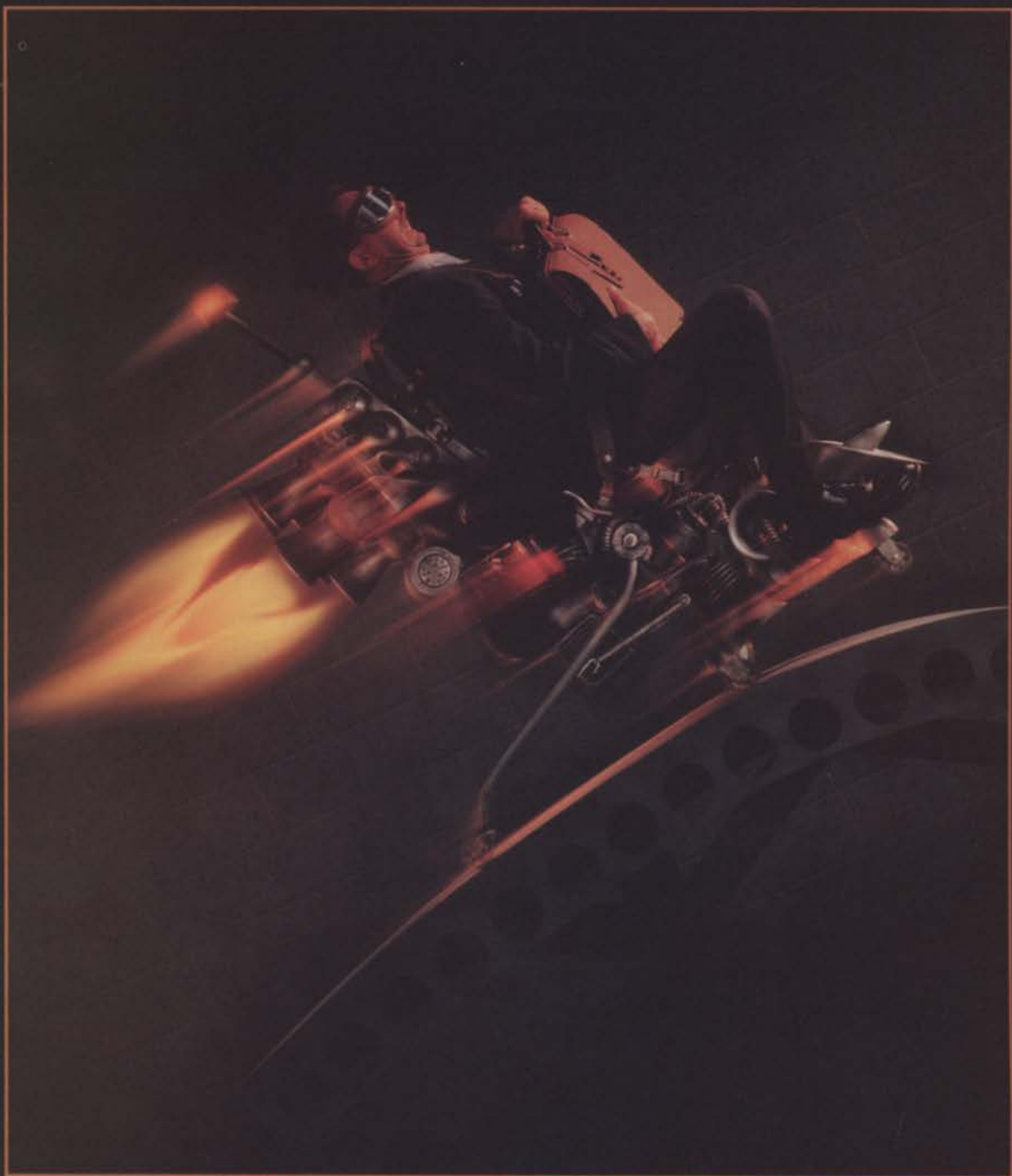


**Kubota tractors for every grounds task**

Tractor is powered by a 16-hp V-twin OHV B&G Vanguard engine. The tractor features an electric blade clutch, a 42-inch twin-blade mow-

**KIOTI**  
**(919) 291-6111**  
**Circle No. 298**

Kiotti's three four-wheel drive compact tractors are rugged machines. They're powered by 3-cyl-



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Circle No. 135 on Reader Inquiry Card

# Hispanic headaches

by RON HALL / Managing Editor

*This is the final installment in our series on Hispanic labor in the green industry. Our look at this important fact and facet of green industry life began in October, with a look at the growing reliance on Hispanic labor. Part II, in November, examined the network available to help find documented aliens. But realists that we are, we know there are always hitches, glitches and hoops to jump through to make the system work to your benefit. And so, we bring you Part III.*

*We don't plan to say goodbye to this issue, either. Many of our readers have strong opinions on whether this trend is good or bad for the green industry. Trends also have a way of changing on a moment's notice, and we expect to update our readers on all the important developments as they happen.*

LM

*The green industry's eagerness to employ growing numbers of Hispanic workers doesn't come without challenges and pitfalls.*

Landscape Frank Mariani says immigration whisked away 55 of his Mexican workers this past fall, leaving him understaffed.

"We had 200 I-9 forms (required for each employee to establish work eligibility) and not a single violation," says Mariani who operates one of the largest, full-service landscape companies in the Chicago area. "Some of the people they took, I was shocked. Some of the people that stayed, I was equally shocked."

That "visit" by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) highlights the most dramatic challenge facing employers that rely on seasonal Hispanic labor. It's hardly the only one though.

What about language? Many newly arrived Hispanic workers don't speak English. Some can't read, not even their native Spanish.



Grover: provide language training.



Mariani: shocked by INS removal of documented workers.

"The language barrier is something that we did not want to subject ourselves to dealing with, but especially we did not want to subject our clients to dealing with it" admits Robert Grover with Northwest Landscape Industries, Portland, OR. But, in 1990 NWI began employing Mexican laborers anyway.

"At first we tried to encourage our supervisors

to learn Spanish. That did not seem to be effective," says Grover. "In reality, to survive in the U.S. it's important to be able to speak English. We've spent our resources in either providing translation services to those folks who can't speak functional English. Or to help, encourage and provide opportunities for them to work on their English speaking skills."

**Who speaks the language?**

Even so, NWI, like most companies reporting success with Hispanic labor, has a key person, sometimes several, that speak both languages well. In

NWI's case it's an assistant supervisor/trainer.

Michelle Underdahl serves as the human resource manager for Arteka Corp., Eden Prairie, MN. With a Cuban heritage and a firsthand knowledge of both the Spanish language and Latin culture, Underdahl joined the Arteka team four years ago, several years after it hired its first Mexican workers.

Her company provides incentives for non-English speaking employees to learn English. These incentives include money and also an opportunity for a better-paying position.

Several of Arteka's Mexican workers, in fact, have improved their English and job skills enough to become foremen. But the client contact, to this point anyway, remains at the next level, with a job superintendent.

**Training an issue**

Training is obviously tied to language.



**Underdahl: incentives for those who learn English.**

## Hispanic labor supply to shrink?

A bill aimed at reducing illegal immigration, and also reducing the access of legal immigrants to welfare, was signed into law this past September. The bill:

- ▶ provides for stronger border enforcement, adding 1,000 border patrol agents per year for five years, bring the total from 5,175 in 1996 to almost 10,000 by the year 2000.
- ▶ requires the Immigration and Naturalization Service to build a 14-mile fence on the U.S.-Mexican border south of San Diego. It also increases penalties for smuggling aliens into the U.S. and for using false documents to obtain U.S. jobs or welfare assistance.
- ▶ adds 1,200 INS investigators agents who inspect U.S. work places for unauthorized workers, and apprehend and deport criminal aliens.
- ▶ introduces a pilot telephone verification program to enable employers to verify the status of newly hired workers. However, participation in the verification program is voluntary.
- ▶ provides incentives for states to develop counterfeit-resistant driver's licenses and birth certificates.
- ▶ makes it easier for employers to defend themselves against suits from job applicants who believe that they were discriminated against by employers checking their legal status. They now must prove that the employer intended to discriminate.
- ▶ expands and strengthens restrictions on the access of legal immigrants to welfare benefits. Non-U.S. citizens were barred from Food Stamp assistance and Supplemental Security Income. The law left it up to states to decide whether to permit legal immigrants to participate in Medicaid, medical assistance for the poor.

At Arteka, all training materials, including handbooks and safety manuals are translated into Spanish. "Everything that we have is in English and Spanish," says Underdahl.

Adds Randy Ferrari, vice president of operations Minor's Landscape Services, Fort Worth, TX: "The moment a Mexican worker comes into the door they are given an application that is done in Spanish. Then we have an HR (human resources) assistant that is Hispanic that interviews and documents that employee. From that point everything they see and do in the company is done in Spanish—policy manuals, training videos. All meetings are done in English and in Spanish."



**Ferrari: company proficient in Spanish too.**

(LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT magazine turned up a smattering

of Spanish-language training material, including some excellent information from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America [ALCA]. Some industry suppliers provide Spanish-language operations manuals and labels also. Generally, the industry needs help here though.)

**Getting to work**

Transportation to and from your golf course, company headquarters or job sites can be a big problem too. Many Hispanic workers don't have drivers licenses. Chapel Valley Landscape, Woodbine, MD, is miles west of Washington D.C. and



**Woolman: worker transportation a problem.**

Baltimore. About 90 percent of its front-line workforce is Hispanic including Mexicans, Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and Puerto Ricans. Most live at least 45 minutes from Chapel Valley offices. To get to work, employees depend on other employees. Often they have to leave before daybreak to catch their rides. "The key to that is good communication with your staff," says Deonne Woolman of Chapel Valley.

*The U.S. Census Bureau says the migration is changing the face of the U.S. where, by the year 2050, one in four people will be of Hispanic heritage.*

Arteka's Underdahl says her company provides van transportation to and from work for those workers that have no other way to work. As the workforce has become established, fewer need the service though, she says.

But even if a Hispanic worker has a driver's license, the employee often can't afford vehicle insurance. Grover of Northwest Landscape Industries says his company established a rapport with a local insurance agent who often can help these individuals get insurance.

"A worker can't go very much up the wage scale unless he has a license," says Grover.

**Challenges galore**

Employee housing can be an issue too. Sometimes workers maintain households and families in Texas or Mexico, and need housing during their seasonal employment.

How about health benefits? Workers, even the best and strongest get sick and have accidents. Unemployment compensation? Laws are different in different states.

Even assuming a green industry firm can attract welcome Hispanic help in the first place, how can it retain it from season to season? There are no guarantees.

"We do still struggle with some turnover," admits Chapel Valley's Woolman, "But we do have about a 90 percent return rate after our 10 to 12 week layoff season." She attributes some of this success to a benefits package the company provides these workers.

Farrari of Minor's Landscape says his company tries to keep good workers by helping them move up the career ladder. "I think this sets the pace for the other employees. When they see success happening in the company, they can see that they can move forward and develop in the company too," says Farrari.

Given these hurdles, it would seem that Hispanic workers would not be in great demand. But they are. And they're likely to remain so, at least as long as low unemployment in many parts of the U.S. makes labor, any labor, scarce.

**Here to stay**

But, Hispanic workers are more visible for a more obvious reason too: there are, quite simply, more of them in the United States. Immigration to the U.S., both legal and illegal, soared this past decade. The impact was most noticeable in California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and Illinois.

*For the smaller contractor, the burden of training, transporting and, sometimes even, housing Hispanic workers can be backbreaking.*

The U.S. Census Bureau says the migration is changing the face of the U.S. where, by the year 2050, one in four people will be of Hispanic heritage.

Take Chicago, for instance, where Frank Mariani's company is active. The Latino Institute released a detailed portrait of immigrants in the Chicago area in 1995 that said there were 470,000 immigrants living there, the largest group (278,000)

being from Mexico. From this pool of people comes about 48 percent of the area's "groundskeepers and gardeners."

Sizable green industry operations like Mariani's or like Arteka, Chapel Valley, Minor's and NWI can justify having somebody on their staffs, somebody bilingual, to deal with these matters.

Otherwise, the burden of documenting, training, transporting and, sometimes even, housing seasonal workers falls to the owner or manager. It's a big load, especially considering that an owner/operator is generally also responsible for selling his firm's services and overseeing production.

But, the biggest fear most green industry operations have in hiring Hispanic workers is what happened to Mariani, and many others like him—it's of suddenly losing them again.

The INS has stepped up its efforts to find and deport so-called "illegal" or undocumented workers following passage of last year's new immigration law. (See accompanying article.)

It means that an employer, regardless of how carefully they scrutinize workers' documents always risks the possibility of being left with contracted services to perform or jobs to complete, with nobody to do it.

Most employers admit they're not experts at counterfeit papers. But, it's something they'll have to get better at.

"It's important to educate yourself on what documentation is appropriate and what is not," says NWI's Gover. "There is a lot of false documentation out there. We scrutinize documents. We turn away people that have bogus documents."

Employers with less experience in hiring foreign-born employees aren't as sure they can tell real documents from manufactured ones. Nor apparently are they as concerned considering their need for help.

"If the INS came in my front door, I would make sure my guys got out the back door," says another Chicago-area landscape contractor who asked that his name not be used. **LM**





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# Best budget plans sweat the details

*The budget and strategic plan are needed to drive, direct, change and control your company and individual projects.*

by JAMES HUSTON, MBA

**A** budget is a strategic plan that is "reduced to numbers," to help you organize, control and direct the company.

A well-planned budget will also provide the vital feedback you need to analyze the results and effectiveness of your organization.

The budgeting process produces key standards—or targets—that will help you to run jobs, as well as the overall business.

Estimating is one portion of the four main functional areas in your business. I would say, however, that it is the most important because everything else, including total quality management, is built upon it.

The budgeting process produces cost standards and targets for:

sales (by division); direct costs (by division); gross profit margin (by division); overhead (not necessarily by division); net profit margin (not necessarily by division); labor burden for office and field personnel; field labor hours; equipment; average wage.

These cost standards are then combined with other job-related information in order to determine the cost of the project. Once we identify direct costs on an individual job, we then add markups and margins (net profits, overhead, labor burden, sales tax, etc.)

The break even point for the project is identified once overhead is added to the direct costs. A contingency factor and profit are added to the break even point in order

to arrive at the final price for the project.

It is these two numbers—the break even point and final price—that you are constantly attempting to identify during the estimating process. They answer two critical questions and identify a bidding "envelope" or range within which you need to price your jobs.

The break even point determines how low you can bid the job and still cover all costs. It is a compilation of costs for a job and is therefore fairly analytical in nature. However, the final price is subjective and determines how high you can bid and still get the job.

## **Bid to make money**

What pricing structure will the market bear? Can you add 40 percent gross profit margin GPM to the project and still get the job? Or will this market and this particular job realistically only allow you to add 15 to 18 percent GPM above direct costs in

order to have a real chance of winning the bid?

You must always determine and monitor the BEP and GPM on jobs being bid. This helps you measure, control and allocate the overhead dollars in an overhead budget. Because overhead costs are "indirect" costs, there is no right or wrong amount of overhead costs to allocate to a job being bid. Subsequently, the five different methods of pricing jobs are not right or wrong concerning overhead recovery. There simply is no right or wrong way to determine the amount of overhead costs to put in a particular job being bid.

The question to ask is not, "How much overhead should I add to a job and by which method?"

Ask instead: "If I sell a job for a certain price and complete the job on-budget, will it help me achieve my budgeted gross and

*cont. on page 32*

## Monthly payments fuel cash flow

Larry Iorii, president of Down to Earth, Wilmington, DE, obtains payments from clients at the beginning of every year, not the beginning of spring. The influx of cash is a hedge against new season overhead.

From April to December, Iorii's clients may make up to 10 payments on service that is scheduled or already completed.

"Let's say for 1997, we have a \$10,000 commercial account. If we don't start work till mid-March, we pick up an installment in January. If a \$10,000 account does not want to pay you in advance, we have a very heavy first installment payment. We'll ask for \$3000 in March, then divide the remaining payments out over the remainder of the contract."

For his lawn care accounts, Iorii asks for 60 percent of the contract amount, due on March 15, with the balance due October 15. □



**Iorii:  
Payment  
plans  
work!**