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Grab Bag

Only driven by old ladies on weekends?

Pssst!, Hey buddy, how'd you like to buy a clean used Kubota tractor real cheap? Barely used.

If you hear this line, be suspicious, be real suspicious, says the Kubota Tractor Corporation.

Kubota recently won a landmark case which it hopes will stem the importation and sale of used "gray market" Kubota tractors into the United States. Kubota reported that an administrative law judge of the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) fined Gamut Imports, Inc., \$650,000 for violating a Cease and Desist order prohibiting Gamut's importation and sale of the tractors. It's expected the ruling will be reviewed by the ITC.

The used tractors in question were manufactured for use in Japan, and may not have safety features required in the United States, such as ROPs and PTO shields. Also, these tractors are not backed by a Kubota warranty, and it may be difficult to get parts and or service manuals for them, a spokesperson at Kubota tells LM.

How can you tell if that used tractor that you're considering buying is a grey market tractor?

Find the serial number plate (usually by the pedals near the operator's seat), write down the serial number and the model number of the tractor and take this information to an authorized Kubota dealer to see if it's a unit they can support, says Kubota.



Want to snaz up your front yard?

Mike Hebrard is a whiz at painting colorful logos on athletic fields, so when a friend asked him to paint a special design on his lawn, Mike gave it a try. Now his "lawn art" is a common sight in and around Portland, OR. Mike, owner of Athletic Field Design, Clackamas, OR, says some of the requests he gets for lawn art are, well . . . different.

Landscape spending rises in 1998

American homeowners spent a record \$16.8 billion for professional landscape/lawn care/tree services last year — a 32% increase in the average amount spent per household. The latest Gallup Survey results, sponsored by a consortium of green industry associations, noted that spending jumped \$2.2 billion in 1998.

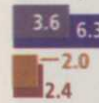
Landscape installation and construction activities had the largest growth, with a jump of \$2.7 billion in spending (a 48% rise in average amount per household). The survey was conducted by the American Nursery & Landscape Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, the National Arborist Association and the National Gardening Association.

Grab Bag features brief observations and prognostications throughout the green industry. If you have an unusual photo or comment you'd like to share with us, please send it in...

lawn/landscape maintenance



landscape installation/construction



landscape design



tree care



totals




Total amount spent (billions)

1997 \$
1998 \$

Number of Households Using Services (millions)

1997
1998

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