



# Campus Clean-Up Tips

by Pierre Pereira

Blowers and vacuums have become ubiquitous in the equipment sheds of most university campuses today. We see these pieces of equipment in use for seasonal leaf, bloom, and seed clean up in spring and fall as well as litter clean up throughout the year and following events. They are often used for the seasonal chores to productively clean up sports field turf as well as the pedestrian and parking areas throughout the campus, to keep them looking their best. This article provides some productivity tips to consider when buying blowers and vacs.

## Blower Productivity and Tips

When looking at blowers, planners need to consider walk-behinds. Backpack blowers often require too much labor, and a walk-behind can accomplish just as much work and more, with less labor. Planners should consider that one 18 hp walk-behind blower can do as much work as up to seven laborers with backpacks! A 13 hp blower may be the most productive for the money, with the equivalent output of six backpacks. In addition, push blowers are often quieter than two-cycle backpacks and require no mixed fuel. Ergonomically, with walk-behind blowers, there is no weight on the back of the crews, and today's walk-behind blowers offer an optional single speed self-propelled feature that eliminates the fatigue associated with pushing units on turf or in hilly conditions. This feature leads to even better productivity. The self-propelled feature also comes in handy when loading a truck, as ramp loading can be done with no lifting. Lastly, directional air discharge is available on demand, allowing the operator to come on and off work as required by the job for precise control. For larger areas or sport fields, stand-on, zero-turn blowers offer exceptionally fast clean-up,

seamless maneuverability, and less fatigue for workers. Compact units will fit through gates, and these blowers are great on turf or hard surfaces.

## Vacuum Productivity and Tips

When looking at vacuums, key things to consider are whether the device is push or self-propelled, how easy the bag handling is, the width of the intake and ease of adjusting the intake; the ease of installing and using an optional hose kit, and the need of dust control. For mostly hard surfaces and small amounts of time spent on clean-up, an entry level push model would be best. If the crew is using vacs often—or using the vacs on turf—then a wider model is best. Self-propelled systems, easy slide out bags, and simple debris loading and unloading make for the most productive models. If the crews are frequently using the optional hose kit to clean up in hard to reach areas, then models which allow the system to easily shift between vacuum and hose kit are preferred. Also, buyers should look for systems that have height intake doors that are adjustable from the operator station to easily handle different size debris such as larger bottles or cans. Lastly, in the case of dusty

conditions, new dust socks are available to keep the dust to a minimum. These dust socks wrap around a standard turf bag. Planners should remember, however, that these bags can only be used in dry conditions. If they get wet, they will not work because water knocks out the static charge in the material that helps the bags attract the dust.

Maintenance crews who use these tips will be able to keep their campuses looking great in all seasons!



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Pierre Pereira has a fifteen-year background in the lawn and garden industry as Sr. Director of Sales for North America at Billy Goat / Briggs and Stratton, LLC and previously as Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Billy Goat Industries. Pierre's industry background encompasses a wide understanding of customers' needs, products and markets and includes his own experience as a landscaper in his earlier days, earning his way through college. Pierre has served on the board of directors for the American Rental Association and received his MBA from NYU.