

Lawn and Garden Tractors

by OPEI

Lawn and garden tractors offer multiple combinations of convenience, versatility, and comfort, especially for large-acreage facilities with varied landscapes.

Today's lawn and garden tractors are equipped with front-mounted, low-emission, four-cycle gasoline engines that meet and exceed federal and state emissions standards. Engine sizes range from 11 to 26 horsepower, and benefits include greater fuel efficiency, quicker throttle response, and improved starting over older models.

Both lawn tractors and garden tractors are available with a variety of grass cutting decks. Deck size ranges from 30 to 60 inches, and consumers can choose from side-discharge, rear-discharge, and mulching models. Side- and rear-discharge decks can also be fitted with grass collection systems.

Many styles of lawn and garden tractors are equipped with automatic or shift on the go transmissions, all-wheel steering, headlights, tail lights and many other features and attachments. Today's models are durable, attractive, and powered by clean-running engines that produce significantly less smog-forming emissions than those produced as recently as 1990.

In colder climates where snow is a factor, dozer blades or snow throwing attachments expand the utility of lawn and

garden tractors. Optional snow cabs provide extra operator comfort in stormy conditions.

Garden tractors

Garden tractors are ideal for maintaining facilities with three to five acres or more. They provide a good option for consumers looking for equipment that can handle a variety of grounds care needs. Besides mowing, the multi-use tractors handle tilling, hauling, digging, moving soil, or removing snow. The versatile, heavy-duty workhorses feature low-emission engines with power ranges of 14 to 26 horsepower.

The main difference between a garden tractor and a lawn tractor is the garden tractor's ability to use either a front or rear power take-off (PTO) shaft to operate attachments. Garden tractors also use mowing decks that offer wider cutting capabilities compared to lawn tractors. Deck sizes range from 36 to 60 inches or more.

A garden tractor with a PTO can accommodate implements such as plows, tillers, disc harrows, row cultivators, small backhoes, bulldozer blades, front-end loaders, snow throwers, and other accessories. They can also pull carts or wagons to haul supplies.

Lawn tractors

A lawn tractor is a good choice when its primary task is cutting and collecting, or mulching grass for facilities with one to three acres of land. Engine sizes vary from 11 to 18 horsepower. Options include rear- and side-discharge grass collection systems, lawn sweepers, dump carts, and dethatchers. Mulching mower decks are also available. They save considerable time and expense, and they can reduce commercial fertilizer needs by as much as 25 percent.

Safety features

Important safety devices on lawn and garden tractors help prevent serious accidents. Most machines include a key safety start interlock switch to prevent accidental start-up. Machines with operator presence control (OPC) automatically stop the engine and powered attachments when the operator leaves the seat.

Safety features are often specially shaped and color coded so they can be identified by feel or quick glance. Safety guards protect against objects thrown by cutting blades. Most models also feature parking brakes and headlights.

Owners should always refer to the operator's manual provided by the manufacturer to read about important safeguards and special safety instructions before operating a lawn or garden tractor.

OPEI is a trade association whose membership is primarily composed of U.S. manufacturers of powered lawn and garden maintenance products, components, attachments, and services. For information, write: 310 S. Patrick St., Old Town Alexandria, VA 22314; phone: (703) 549-7600; fax: (703) 549-7604; or visit: <http://opei.mow.org>.

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