

What do you do when you generate large volumes of green waste on the one hand, and on the other, are being hit hard financially by ever increasing costs for waste disposal?

With more and more green waste being processed the focus now is on standards. Next issue we will take a close look at the PAS100, the British Standards guidelines for compost.

If you would like to talk to Beech about their operation, or operate around the Thames Valley and require "on site" contract shredding services, give them a call on 0118 9781207.

BEST PRACTICE

Berkshire based Garden, Grounds & Estate Maintenance Contractors, Beech Landscapes believe they have found the answer, and have fulfilled their objective of processing vast amounts of troublesome green waste without having to resort to burning or disposing to landfill and produces a useful end-product in to the bargain.

They had to dig deep into their pockets, but an investment of around £36000 in a new shredder and a second-hand tractor to process green waste at sites they manage throughout the Thames Valley, has proved to be a great success.

"Initially I was very dubious about the concept of on site shredding" said director, Ruth Beech, "particularly when we looked at the initial set up costs. It represents a significant investment for a family run enterprise like ours. However, faced with ever increasing charges to send waste to landfill and the likelihood of the implementation of legislation to control the burning of

commercial waste, we felt it was the sensible way forward".

There are a host of shredders on the market, but their choice was the Zago Ecogreen machine marketed by King Feeders of Macclesfield. The Italian built Ecogreen is available in five capacities up to 24 cubic metres and can be fitted a wide range of optional extras. The machine operated by Beech Landscapes has 13 cubic metre capacity and has a power requirement of 75hp at the driveline. An independent on board hydraulic system supplies power for the loading crane and discharge elevator functions. The Massey 3080 -120hp tractor used to tow and power the unit runs all day at a steady 1250rpm using approximately 60 litres of diesel. The shredder contains two heavy duty augers carrying serrated blades on their flights operating against a series of fixed counter blades which, whilst revolving at 25 rpm, slice and shred the material (which can be up to 10" in diameter) to a mulch within a matter of minutes. The mixing process is assisted by a

pair of augers allowing the introduction of other material such as well rotted farmyard manure to give a good blend. The mulch can then be discharged via a stainless steel elevator into windrows or directly into a vehicle for transportation around the site. The temperature in the windrows is monitored on a regular basis using a digital probe thermometer. The mulch is then turned on site two or three times to introduce oxygen and keep it "working", the idea being to let the bacteria digest the green material. The heat generated during the process kills off any weed seeds in the mix. A temperature of around 70deg C is crucial for good break-down. The virtually sterile end product resulting after

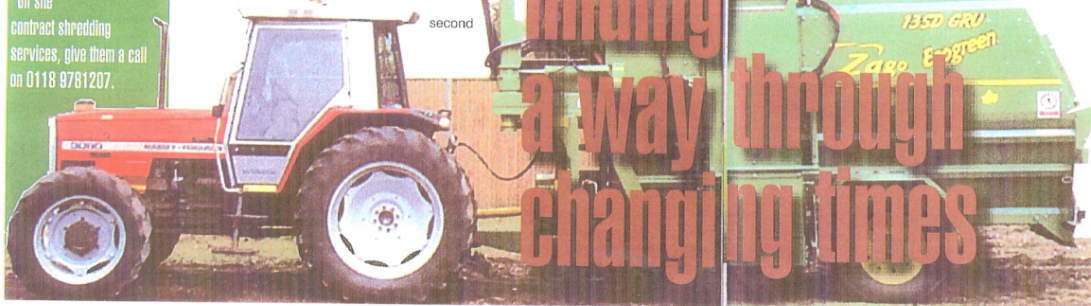
two -three months can then be used as a mulch for shrubberies and borders.

What they liked about the Zago machine was its ability to cope with the wide variety of green waste their operations produce, from grass clippings in the height of the growing season through tree and shrub prunings to the hundreds of tons of wet leaves they clear during the Autumn months.

"The capacity of our machine", says Simon, "whilst

dictated in our case by capital cost has proved to be just right for a medium sized company like ours. We can process in excess of 100 cubic metres of bulky green waste material in one day. Reducing the material by at least 7: 1 in volume, gives us a material of even consistency, which is easy to handle, and then further reduces in volume during the composting process".

Beech Landscapes are already providing contract shredding services to a number of other landscape companies, garden centres and plant nurseries in the area which provides the company with another source of winter income and subsidises their own waste processing costs.



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