

A Heavy Duty Leaf Vacuum for Greenhouse Use[®]

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At Bailey Nurseries, Inc. in Yamhill, Oregon, we use a leaf vacuum to remove leaves and debris from our beds of rooted cuttings. It is a sanitation issue and it also makes the fall harvest and digging process easier since the people doing the harvest don't have to deal with leaf debris. The vacuum is mounted on a trailer that was manufactured to fit the alley ways of our greenhouses. It could be custom mounted on almost any type of trailer or motor driven equipment. It is quite heavy. We have modified the vacuum to use two vacuum hoses at the same time. This way we can cover twice as much area with the same tool. It has the ability to suck up anything from plant tags to potted plants to bricks so care must be taken not to get too close to anything you want to keep.

The manufacturer of our vacuum is Trac-Vac located in Indiana. We purchased the Model 2100 in 1994 from a local equipment dealer. It has been relatively trouble-free. An 11-hp Briggs and Stratton engine powers the vacuum. A replaceable wear liner around the inside of the impeller housing is standard equipment. The impeller's housing is subject to wear because of dirt, sand, and pumice present in vacuumed materials. There are several manufacturers of this type of equipment in the United States and Canada. These vacuums are manufactured for the Turf and Golf industries and are often used in conjunction with a lawn mower.

The vacuum has an impeller that virtually mulches anything that passes through. This means leaves, sticks, pumice, and debris are ground up before going into the hopper. A side benefit to this cleanup process is the creation of a fantastic compost pile that can be used for a number of different things around the nursery. At the present time we are in the process of modifying the leaf collection system. Our goal is more efficiency in handling the debris that comes from the vacuum as well as dust control.